THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

FOUNDED, A.D. 1821

THE GREAT PIONEER FAMILY PAPER OF AMERICA.

Vol. 65. PUBLICATION OFFICE No. 725 SANSOM ST. PHILADELPHIA SATURDAY DECEMBER 26, 1885. $2.50 A YEAR IN ADVANCE. FIVE CENTS A COPY. No. 24.

THE ARTISTS AND THE DAY.

BY P. HENRY DOYLE.

In the world's, hard selfish marble
White with coldness and with woe,
There's a toiler now at labor,
And his hands ply blow on blow.
Fast the stone takes on new meaning
As the bleak block fades away—
For the Sculptor is Affection,
And the work is Christmas Day.

There's a painter painting pictures
In the eyes of young and old—
In their hearts and in their spirits—
Pictures framed in deathless gold.
Ne'er were fingers half so skilful
As his sketching 'long life's way—
Ne'er was artist like true Love is—
Ne'er was canvas like To-Day.

There are singers singing carols—
And the grand song grandly rolls
Thro' the centuries, full of promise,
Full of joy, for human souls.
And the earth of Now joins with it,
Angels chant, and all hearts play—
While the Hand of Love keeps beating
In the time of Christmas Day.

THE WAR OF THE ROSES

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HIS WEDDED WIFE," "BARBARA GRAHAM," "PENKIVAL," "WE KISSED AGAIN," "BUNCHIE," ETC.

CHAPTER XXI.—[CONTINUED.]

He seemed to have come to his senses with a sudden shock. It was characteristic of him that the first great and real love of his life should be for the wrong person.

He never thought of checking or controlling his love because Lady Castlemaine was married.

Marriage!—the sanctity of married life, the holiness of the marriage tie—had never formed the slightest barrier between him and his desires.

He hardly gave it a thought. It was the first time in his life that he had fallen deeply and passionately in love; all his other pursuits had been fancies—the foolish pursuits of pretty faces. This was a different matter.

The pride and the coldness of Lady Castlemaine only deepened his love. If she would have flirted with him, have encouraged him, have given him smiles in return for his profuse compliments, all would have been well, but she was "a goddess in the clouds."

She liked talking to him; she considered him a great hero, she enjoyed his stories and anecdotes.

She thought him one of the most distinguished of men, but she never deigned even to listen to compliments, implied flattery, or implied love-making. It was that which made the pursuit of her all the more piquant to him.

The man who had taken so many hearts, who had ruined so many homes, who had blighted so many lives—the man who had forgotten that the true test of a soldier is not only his bravery in the battle-field, but his reverence for women—this man had fallen in love at last! and, as a matter of course with a man like himself, had fallen in love with one whom he could never marry.

* * * * * *

PICTURES FROM THE MASQUERADE.

Picture the first. A group of tall, slender palms in the background; nestling at their feet a group of rich Indian blossoms, scarlet in color, shaped like bells, fragrant with rich odors that belong to the flowers of the East.

A group of tall, white orchids on one side, a magnificent mass of stephanotis on the other; between them a prettily carved iron seat.

On it sits the beautiful figure already known through the room as "Dawn," in the charming blush of pale rose and gold, and a tall, aristocratic figure in the dress of a Venetian nobleman.

Lord Castlemaine not only has no taste for flirting, but he despises it; he considers it, and has the frankness to say so, always the refuge of a weak mind.

"When a woman has few charms of mind, when she lacks intelligence, wit, and poetry, she takes to flirtation because she can do no better; when a man lacks brightness and intellect he does the same!" Lord Castlemaine was accustomed to observe.

It was a fault he had never been guilty of, and one that he had little toleration for.

There was no trace of it in his manner now as he leaned over the seat, talking earnestly to "Dawn."

A faint light reached them, and it came filtered through the white orchids. Sweet sounds reached them, the "Sweethearts" waltz was being played in the ball-room; and from the fernery came the sound of the rippling water as it fell from the rocky stones to the green moss below.

"I cannot imagine who you are," he said. "That you can say such a thing to me, above all other men."

"Have you no idea who I am?" asked a low voice, the sweetness of which was disguised by a faint whisper.

"Not the least; but I should say, from your observation to me, that you cannot know much of me, and that you know still less of my affairs."

"So you imagine," said beautiful 'Dawn.' "Is there nothing familiar either in my face or in my figure?"

He looked at her curiously.

"The light is so faint," he said, "and you speak in whispers. No; I have not the faintest idea who you are."

"I am surprised," she said. "Yet I have lived in the world long enough not to be surprised at anything. Do you think any disguise would prevent you from knowing your wife?"

"No," he replied. "None; but then you see she is my wife; that just makes the difference."

"And I ought to have been," thought beautiful 'Dawn' to herself. "I, and no other."

"If you do not know me," he said, "it was a startling remark to make. If you do know me, the remark is even more strange."

"I am not quite sure," she said, "if I remember what my remark was.

"So much the better," he answered. "It shows at least there was no meaning in it."

"Will you mind telling me what it was?" she asked, slowly.

"You said that I was happily married, still that I had not married the one woman in the world who loved me best."

She drew a beautiful bough of the white orchids to herself, and bent her face over them.

"How sweet they are," she said. "I am sure that orchids must have grown in the Garden of Eden."

"Never mind the orchids," he answered, drawing the white blooms from her. "What did you mean?"

"Give me your hand," she said. "Nay, draw off your golden-embroidered glove, or it will be of little use to me."

He did so and placed before her a strong, supple white hand. The clean, honest hand of an upright man.

She touched it with hers.

"Let me see it more plainly," she said, parting with her other hand the branches of the orchids.

She looked at it long and steadily. The sweet, sad music of the 'Sweethearts' came from the ball room, and the ripple of the water from the fernery; there was no other sound.

It seemed to her that he must hear the quick beating of her heart. She had never held his hand in her own so long before. While she held it she repeated the vow that she had whispered to the white lilies.

Then, suddenly, she let it fall.

"I am a fortune teller after a fashion," she said, "a fashion that holds good in the Moorish camps, and amongst the gypsies of Spain."

"She cannot possibly be a Spaniard; she speaks English too well!" he thought.

"And what," he said, "has that to do with my fortune?"

She looked at him thoughtfully.

"Your fortune has interested me. I know you, although you do not recognize me; and what I read in your face I have read now in your hand. My ideas are confirmed."

From the white orchid and the stephanotis came a great gust of perfume; the ripple of the water was sweeter and stronger.

"And your ideas are——"

"Just what I said," she interrupted. "First, that you did not marry the one woman in the world who loved you best, and now, in your hand, I read—ah, well, it is better not to speak of it!"

"I should like to know," he persisted.

"Well, if the old Moorish teaching be right, it is not good fortune that lies in that strong, white hand of yours."

He smiled.

"What fortune does lie there?" he said. "Tell me!"

"A sad one," she replied; "there is a sudden and violent termination in the line of love, and there are some terrible lines of pain."

"What do you adduce from that?" he asked.

"Nothing," she replied. "It is for you to draw what deductions you will."

"I draw none," he replied. "I have firm faith."

His heart beat and his face flushed, as he thought of Gertrude, whom he should love blindly until death.

"You will remember my words some day," she said.

"I hope it will only be to laugh at them," he replied.

Just then the music ceased, and several people came into the conservatory.

"Dawn" suddenly rose, and shook her long skirts of pale pink with flecks of gold, and before he could say more, she had vanished from amongst the slender green palms and left him standing there.

Picture the second: The pale crescent moon is rising in the dark sky, and its light penetrates into the cool, green fernery, where the lamps, like pale golden stars are half hidden by the green leaves; where the ferns grow strong and moist and the rippling water falls from the stones to the soft springing moss; a subdued light that is of pale gold lingers here.

In the midst of the rock-work there stands a tall fountain, the spray of which rises high in the air, the music of which, as it falls into the marble basin, is soft and sweet to the ear; by the fountain stand some elegant bamboo chairs, as easy and luxurious as chairs can be.

In one of them sits the white and radiant Snow Queen; she looked bright and brilliant enough in the ball-room, but here, in the soft light, amongst the tall, feathery ferns and the ripples of running water, she looks dazzling, the one centre of white and light in the ocean of green.

She lies back thoughtfully in her chair; the snowy robes form graceful billows around her and sweep the ground; the light falls on the diamond stars and trembles in the diamond circles; her lovely face is pale.

She has removed her glove and laid her hand in the dimpling, restless waters of the fountain.

A shadow falls over the green ferns and the water, and the tall figure of a Knight Templar draws near.

He stands for some few minutes in silent contemplation of what seems to him the most charming picture he had ever beheld.

"Eve in the Garden of Eden was never one half so fair," he said to himself.

Then he went up to the bright, white figure.

"The Queen of Snow," he said, with a profound bow; "would that I were Knight of the Frost and the Ice."

"You look much better as you are," replied a laughing voice.

"Supposing," he said, "that you had some very fragrant roses and you tried to hide them between green leaves, so that no one would discover them, the perfume would be sure to steal through the leaves and betray the roses."

"Quite sure," was the laughing reply.

"If a bright, golden star were shining, you could not, unless you closed your eyes, help seeing its light."

"Certainly not," was the answer.

"If the sweetest music were stealing softly round, you could not help hearing, while your ears were open, and your senses alive. "So—so—" he continued, passionately, "you may hide the fair loveliness of your face, you may disguise the tone of your voice, but I should know you amongst ten thousand; you are Lady Castlemaine, and you have rightly called yourself the Snow Queen."

"Just as you have rightly called yourself a Knight Templar; you are Colonel Lennox."

"You make me the proudest man in the world," he said.

"I have not given you much reason for suddenly occupying such a very high and lofty position," she said.

"You are always satirical to me," he complained.

"And you will persist in being sentimental with me," she replied.

"You are cruel to me," he said; "the flowers that lie on your heart are happy because you breathe on them, and they live; the fresh, sweet water dimpling round your fingers there must be happy, because you caress it; while I, who would give my life for a smile or a kind word, can never get either."

She rose from her seat, a dazzling, white figure tall, haughty, and erect.

"I am Lady Castlemaine," she said, "and you are Colonel Lennox; but I am half inclined to forbid you to enter my presence again."

"Why?" he cried despairingly.

"Because I do not like those labored compliments of yours. I decline to be compared to roses, or music, or stars.

"I will never do it again," he said—"never."

"You promise me most faithfully?" she said.

"I promise on my word," he replied.

"Then you can sit down here and we'll go on talking," and with careless grace she resumed her seat.

Picture third: In the great drawing-room of white and gold, Lady Heather, as Flora Macdonald, sits leaning languidly on the dark velvet of the chair.

She is talking most confidentially to a handsome man who wears the dress of Sir Walter Raleigh.

"Yes," she was saying—"yes, I have enjoyed the first part of the evening better

than I shall the second. We are to unmask at supper. Then, so far as I am concerned, all the pleasure of the night is over. I have enjoyed some things exceedingly."

"You always extract plenty of amusement from everybody," said her companion. "That is the one happy faculty I envy you."

"I have been talking to the poet, and he did not know me. I had the pleasure of abusing his poems, his theories, and his ideas to his face, which you will admit was a treat to me."

"I can well imagine that it was so," he answered, slowly.

"He will never suspect—poor Oswald. We are very good friends to all outward appearances, but I have often longed to give him a little of my mind, and now he has had it."

And Lady Heather began to discuss the characters of the evening.

"I found out the Knight Templar," she said; "that handsome, brave, graceless Colonel Lennox. How the poet hates him!"

"He is sure to do so. The man who wrote the 'Loves of the Lilies' would never tolerate a man of the colonel's stamp."

Then Sir Walter Raleigh bent his head, and whispered to her. Lady Heather listened with a sorrowful expression of face.

"No," she replied, "I had not heard."

"Not a whisper?" said her companion.

"No, not even a whisper," said Lady Heather; "and I am with her every day."

"Have you seen him with her?" he asked.

"Yes, continually. I have been at Neath House once with him."

"And you saw nothing?"

"Less than nothing. Lady Castlemaine is too proud and too cold; she will never be talked about."

"But she is talked about. Lord Merton told me."

"I do not believe one word of it. Remember," she added, raising one white finger warningly to him, "no scandal about Queen Elizabeth!"

He laughed, and moved away.

Picture fourth and last: Beautiful 'Dawn' standing in her room alone, still flushed with triumph.

"He did not know me!" she was saying to herself. "I went from under the same roof. True, I did not go there in the same carriage. I have pierced his heart, and he will never suspect me. I am nearer to the end!"

CHAPTER XXII.

"ONLY FOOLISH RUMORS."

LORD CASTLEMAINE was just a little puzzled, not suspicious, but puzzled. He had nothing to be suspicious over; but he was in the reading room of his club, his face and head hidden by a copy of the *Times*, on which he was intent.

Two members of the club, both well known to him, came in and sat down quite close to him without perceiving him.

They had evidently been deeply engrossed in conversation, and they continued it now.

"There is nothing in it!" said one to the other. "I am quite sure of it! I know her well!"

"It is seldom you find smoke without fire," said the other.

"I do not know; I feel sure this is all smoke! How many such rumors are born and die? Die in a day?"

This was Sir Harry Hope, who always took a bright and hopeful view of things. Colonel Charteris, who answered him, was a man who took a dark view of everything.

"True," he replied, "but I think there is generally some cause for them. I am sorry in this case, for I have a sincere feeling for the lady, and the husband too."

"I do not believe it!" said Sir Harry Hope, "I know them both—husband and wife. I do not think there is a happier pair anywhere."

"I must admit the same thing," said the dark minded colonel. "Whenever I have seen them together they have seemed most united, most devoted to each other. I was utterly astonished."

"But what did you hear?" asked Sir Harry. "Only foolish rumors?"

"I heard the same old story, that he had gone mad over her."

"That is not her fault," interposed Sir Harry. "She cannot be blamed for that."

"Certainly not! but knowing the character of the man, she should not give him the least encouragement. When he was in England before, there was always some scandal or other about him."

"That is not her fault either," interrupted Sir Harry.

"True, but it should make her careful," said the colonel.

"Probably, being quite young and unaccustomed to the world, she knows nothing whatever of the evil side of his reputation and only knows him as one of the bravest officers in England."

"Then her husband should look after her," grumbled the colonel. "I have no patience with the men of to-day; they sit by in silent inactivity while their wives go straight to ruin. I cannot tell what they are made of."

"That is rather a sweeping assertion," said Lord Castlemaine, laying down his paper, and looking both gentlemen in the face.

They could not have been more horrified if they had suddenly seen a ghost. Sir Harry's ruddy face turned suddenly pale, and Colonel Charteris, in his agitation, almost dropped his cigar; but Lord Castlemaine was serenely unconscious.

He had not the most remote idea that the conversation had been about him; he would not have believed it had either of them sworn it.

"That is a sweeping assertion, Charteris!" he repeated; "and, do you think, quite deserved?"

"I am sorry to say I believe it to be perfectly true. I am amazed at the indifferent, callous fashion in which husbands see young and beautiful wives launched in the very sea of fashion, dissipation, and excitement, and make no effort whatever to help them, to keep them safe. I say that it amazes me! A husband should be the guardian of his wife."

Sir Harry Hope laughed, but his laugh was not a bright one.

"I don't think many wives would like that notion," he said.

Lord Castlemaine said—

"I am proud of many things, of my name and race, but I am most proud of the reputation the Castlemaines have always enjoyed of being good husbands."

The two gentlemen looked at each other; their eyes met, but they uttered no word.

"It would be indiscreet," he continued, "to ask of whom you were speaking."

Sir Harry admitted that it would; the colonel was silent.

"I could not help overhearing the conversation," he said. "True, it is no matter of mine—no business whatever of mine, but if I understood you rightly, rumor is busy with the name of some young and beautiful lady."

The two friends looked at each other strangely.

"That is it," replied Sir Harry.

"That some man describes himself as going mad about her, while she is a married woman?"

"True," nodded the colonel.

He wished himself far away, and evidently thought the less said the better.

"If she is married she has a husband to take care of her, I suppose, and to keep all such men at a distance," said Lord Castlemaine.

Both gentlemen nodded, but did not answer; the situation was, to say the least of it, piquant and peculiar.

"I should very quickly decide what to do in his case, let him be whom he may," continued Lord Castlemaine. "If he had dared to speak in that fashion of any married lady let her husband take up her defense; there is no need to whisper it in corners; let her husband find a whip with a good lash, then let him seek out the coward who has so spoken of his wife and lash him in public. One or two such examples would cure all such scoundrels of trying to make love to other men's wives."

Again the two gentlemen looked helplessly from one to the other.

"That is the right thing to do," added Lord Castlemaine. "To quarrel with such a man is to encourage him; to fight with him would be to dignify him; the right thing is to horsewhip him."

"How can you horsewhip a gentleman?" asked the colonel helplessly.

"A gentleman!" repeated Lord Castlemaine, with infinite scorn. "We are not speaking of gentlemen; we are speaking of the cowards and traitors who have no respect for women and no respect for the honor of their fellow men. We do not call such 'gentlemen.' I would brand such men, I believe," and Lord Castlemaine's face shone with a noble light as he spoke. "I believe in the sanctity of marriage, and in the honor of women."

"A noble fellow!" thought the colonel; "but what a situation!"

"Curious things will happen," he said; "I suppose the world is pretty much what it has always been. The sins of Adam and Eve, of Cain and Abel, of David and Solomon, are our sins."

"We may all be sinners," said Lord Castlemaine. "That lies between us and Heaven. We may all be at the same time loyal and honest men—that lies between us and our fellow creatures."

Colonel Charteris rose from his seat and yawned, as politely as possible. Sir Harry imitated him quickly.

Lord Castlemaine wondered why their interest in the subject died so soon and why they seemed in such a hurry to leave it.

"I am going your way," said Sir Harry to the colonel. "Shall we go together?"

The gentlemen left the club together, arm-in-arm.

"Of all the strange things," said Sir Harry solemnly, "that is the strangest. To think that we should have gone into the very room where he was; have taken seats near to him, yet never have noticed him."

"And to think that within sound of his own ears, we should have discussed his wife and Colonel Lennox."

"He had not the faintest idea of whom we were speaking," said Sir Harry.

"Not in the least!" replied the colonel. "It would not have been a pleasant hour for us if he had done so, and it would have been harder still for Lennox."

"Yes," said Sir Harry, with a grim smile, "even his victories in Zululand, the Victoria Cross, and all the honors he has received, would not have saved him from that terrible whip."

"I have seen so much, too," sighed the old colonel.

"I wish that I remembered less," said Sir Harry.

"Nothing that we can say or do will make the world any better," sighed the colonel again.

"No; unless we begin by reforming ourselves," said Sir Harry, and the prospect seemed so remote and so desperate that Sir Harry for the time looked quite a gloomy man.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A CHARACTER PHOTOGRAPHED.

A PHOTOGRAPH hardly gives the lights and shades of a face; the grand outline, the features, the curves of the mouth, and the brow are all reproduced; but not the dainty bloom, not the sheen of the hair, the color of the eyes or the crimson of the mouth.

It is not easy to photograph a character: to reproduce the lights and shades, the delicate tints, the faint coloring; to show where a fault almost widens into virtue and a virtue narrows into a fault; to show how closely they are allied to each other; how many evil qualities are hidden there; to show great possibilities even, and great failures.

The photograph of Lady Castlemaine's character was full of those dainty and delicate tints, full of those variable shades of coloring, full of the finest and noblest qualities, with some almost intolerable faults.

The photograph would show magnificent generosity with perfect unselfishness; a noble reliance and belief in others; a freedom from small vanities; an appreciation of all that is most beautiful in art or nature; a spiritual and religious frame of mind. Anything bordering on atheism or materialism disgusted her.

She had a perfect and fearless love of truth; no mean or false word ever sullied her lips.

She had a clear, bright mind; she was not suspicious; in the full candor of her own soul she believed in the candor of other people.

She was incapable of treachery, she hardly understood it in others; she was not jealous, unforgiving, or revengeful.

She was most tender and loving of heart, and here was one of the strange parts of her character: she was so easily wounded by one whom she loved.

She was quick to take offence, and she took it far more easily from one she loved than from one to whom she was indifferent.

She had naturally an easy temper, but when she was roused to anger she was proud and implacable; she was obstinate and wilful.

When she had made up her mind to a certain course of action she would never give up.

If she had resolved upon doing a certain thing she would do it, even if she risked her life in the attempt.

Perhaps one of the strongest lines in the photograph being one of the strongest of her characteristics.

She could not brook contradiction, opposition, or control, and her mother's training had been the worst possible for her. She had never been denied one wish, or one caprice, one whim, one desire.

When Lady Craven found that opposition to her child produced scenes of anger and passion that distressed her, she ceased to make any opposition, and allowed her to have entirely her own way.

She was never opposed in any one single thing that she wanted; she had that which she desired: when everything was smooth and easy, when she had her own way in everything, she was sweet tempered and gay; when she was contradicted, thwarted, opposed, she became, as it were, transformed.

No unusual photograph, no unusual character; there were in her great possibilities of good and great powers of mischief and of evil.

She could never have been mediocre or commonplace, she must always be very good or very bad; there was no intermediate for her.

A woman of grand possibilities, she might have been one of the noblest of her sex; she might have been one of the most ignoble; her sins would always have been frank ones, and she would never have denied them; she would never have covered them with a veil of hypocrisy.

Even when she was a child Lady Craven laughed at her.

"I have scratched my nurse and have bitten her, mamma," she would say, "and I shall do it again."

She never concealed any of her childish escapades.

"Mamma, I threw a snowball at Gunton's face just when he was carrying a tray of glass into the drawing-room; he let the tray fall and broke them all, and he looked so absurd; I am afraid that I shall do it again."

She never concealed a fault, and that was why Lady Craven took heart of grace. She had grand virtues side by side with great faults.

There were circumstances under which she might have been a saint or a martyr; there were circumstances under which she might have been a petroleuse, but she never could have been mediocre or commonplace.

If she had not been too credulous; if she had not been cursed with a false friend, Lady Castlemaine's life might have been all good and noble; but she was unfortunate in choosing for her friend one who brought all the evil of her nature into play, and ignored the good; one who incited her to rebel against her husband at every turn, to laugh to ridicule all notions of obedience in wives.

One who tried to make her believe that the Castlemaine notion of matrimony was old-fashioned and obsolete; one who, in her odious quality of false friend, did her as much harm as it was possible to do her.

Is the photograph complete? Does the reader see it with all its lights and shades; its dark shadows and its flecks of gold; its black spots and its dainty colors; the character that was destroyed, as a canker destroys a flower, by the influence of a false friend?

During the time of her most happy marriage her faults had grown less; she seemed to have overcome them.

She loved her husband so dearly, and she was so unutterably happy with him, that her virtues and her goodness blossomed and sweetened like flowers in the rays of the sun.

She had been as happy as a bird, or a queen, up to this time, for there had not been between herself and her husband any particular difference of opinion save one.

He was a thorough Conservative; he believed in ancient pedigree—in ancient families and titles.

She did not, and she slightly resented the fact that he did. That fact was always more or less present to her mind, and she remembered it always with bitterness.

They had never actually come into collision; he had never uttered those words of evil import. "You shall!" and she had not retorted, "I shall not!" He had not said, "You must not!" she had not cried, "I will!"

They had differed in opinion. Lord Castlemaine was inclined to think too much of his ancient pedigree, to be too proud of his old family.

Lady Castlemaine was too much inclined the other way.

She expressed a contempt for all such notions and ideas, which was very grievous to him.

Up to the present time they had come to no violent issue about it. When two people, both young, both proud and high-spirited, come together, there must of necessity be some collision, some difference of opinion.

Isabel Hyde had often wondered, if it came to a pitched battle between the two, which would win: if the two strong wills came into contact, which would gain the ascendency.

"It would be an equal contest," she said, "for I believe one to be just as obstinate as the other."

A night came when Lord Castlemaine took his wife to the opera, to hear "Hernani." Isabel accompanied them.

When they were comfortably installed in the box he went away; something occurred to him that he had quite forgotten. With many apologies to his wife and Miss Hyde, he left them.

"I shall not be very long," he said. "I will take a hansom, and drive down to the club. I will be as quick as I can."

He was sorry to leave them, but he had promised to see an old friend who had just returned from Canada and he had forgotten the engagement until now.

"Gertrude," cried Isabel Hyde, "there is Colonel Lennox."

"Where?" asked Lady Castlemaine.

"Do you not see him? He is talking to the Duke of C——, and he sees us. He is coming, I am sure."

For the royal duke to whom he was talking had observed how suddenly he became distrait and distracted, and had said to him—

"You had better follow your eyes, Lennox;" and the colonel availed himself, with a laugh and a bow, of the permission.

"He is coming here," repeated Isabel Hyde, with a curious drawing in of her lips, and a wonder in her heart as to what would follow.

"He is coming here!" said Lady Castlemaine at the same time; but her voice and face were calm.

The next moment he was in the box, bowing low to the two beautiful women seated there.

That opera box had been the great centre of admiration and attraction the whole of the evening. "Hernani" was most beautifully put upon the stage; Patti was at her best; but many of the opera-glasses turned from the stage and lingered on the exquisite faces of the two fair women, the contrast between the two was so great; Lady Castlemaine so radiantly fair in a dress of pale blue velvet, the front of which was almost covered with a network of pearls; she wore a necklace of pearls round her neck, bracelets of pearls on her golden hair; she was a picture of fair and radiant loveliness.

Isabel Hyde presented a perfect contrast; her dark, proud beauty was enhanced by her dress of rich, black lace, with its trimmings of Gloire de Dijon roses; she carried a superb bouquet of the same beautiful flowers.

Many who watched the two eagerly and intently were quite unable to decide which was the fairer.

Colonel Lennox knew; he hardly saw the dark beauty of Isabel Hyde, so engrossed was he by Lady Castlemaine. Isabel looked pleased to see him, calmly indifferent, attentive to the play.

Who could have imagined that in her heart there was a seething torrent of hate and implacable longing for vengeance; that while she smiled at the lovely voice and graceful manner of the most charming Diva in the world, she was hoping and praying that even this night the beginning of the end might arrive.

"I thought I saw Lord Castlemaine with you?" he said.

"Yes, he was with us; but he suddenly remembered that he had promised to see an old friend at the club; he will not be long away."

"I will remain with your permission," said Colonel Lennox. "I have been quite unfortunate in all my efforts to effect an introduction to Lord Castlemaine."

"I at all be very pleased," said the countess, and they began a very earnest discussion about the singers, while Isabel waited in silence.

It was one of the most desperate hours of her life before that night ended: some decisive step she felt sure would be taken,

and the web she had weaved with such difficulty would begin to close.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE OPERA.

A DEAD silence, succeeded quickly by almost frantic applause, followed one of La Diva's most magnificent scenes.

The audience was electrified and left almost breathless; even Colonel Lennox had withdrawn his eyes from the lovely face which enchanted him. Isabel, for the one moment, almost forgot her desire for vengeance.

That crowded house seemed spell-bound, and during that minute Lord Castlemaine returned to the box.

He opened the door most cautiously, fearing to disturb the audience, so deeply engrossed; he was astonished to see a gentleman there; he was still more surprised at finding in that gentleman Colonel Lennox, the man whom he disliked.

It was of little use to recall that dislike now, for his young wife, her face radiant with smiles, introduced Colonel Lennox to him at once.

He was compelled to bow to him, although if he had given way to his natural impulse, he would have politely opened the door and asked him to retire; he was compelled to answer the colonel's courteous greeting with a smile and civil words; but he would fain have said to him—

"You are a man whose moral character I doubt. You are quite unfit to be on even the most distant terms of intimacy with my wife; have the goodness to leave me, and do not seek to renew your acquaintance."

Those words were the honest impulse of his heart; but who, in these days, carries out such impulses.

He bitterly regretted afterwards that he had not followed his impulse.

It was a strange thing that the old hot Castlemaine jealousy was aroused in him at once.

Colonel Lennox was, just then, leaning over the crimson velvet fauteuil in which Lady Castlemaine sat, and her husband disliked the familiarity of the attitude.

He seemed to think that the colonel looked too admiringly at the lovely white shoulders.

He was not the man to submit to such a thing.

"Excuse me," he said; "I want to speak to Lady Castlemaine."

He stood with such an air of expectation that the colonel was compelled to stand up and get away.

Lord Castlemaine took his place with the air of a man who knew what he had done and meant it.

Ah, Heaven, it was coming at last, coming, she was sure, for she, Isabel Hyde, read in Lord Castlemaine's face something which she had never seen there before.

Her heart beat, she saw no more of the stage.

La Diva vanished from her eyes; she was engrossed with the living human tragedy before her own eyes, and this was the first act.

"It is a crowded house!" said the colonel.

"Very," replied his lordship.

"Patti grows no older; she looks to me as young and beautiful as on the first day she came out, or I may say on the first day I saw her."

No answer this time; his lordship did not reply; no need, he said to himself curtly; he should not discuss the beauty of any woman with a man like this.

Isabel noticed, and thought it more prudent to throw herself into the breach; they must not quarrel too soon or her plan would be nipped in the bud, and there would be no tragedy.

She thought it was wiser to draw the colonel's attention to herself.

She looked at him with the smile that bid so much.

"Do you consider personal beauty indispensable in an artist, Colonel Lennox?" she asked.

"I think it is possible to be an exceedingly good actress without it," he replied. "I must admit that at the same time I think, next to genius, it is the greatest gift an actress can have."

"But not indispensable?" said Miss Hyde.

"No, not exactly; I remember once seeing 'La Grande Duchesse' beautifully put upon the stage, and 'Wanda' had so large a mouth that, to my thinking, it quite spoiled everything else. When she was on the stage, one saw nothing else. I do not think personal beauty indispensable, but I do think that any great blemish is a great drawback."

"I do not agree with you," said Lady Castlemaine; "I think all genius is beautiful. Genius and soul make any face a thousand times more lovely than either color or features.

"What can genius do with une nez retrousse, a large mouth, small eyes——"

"Overcome them," cried Lady Castlemaine, "as it overcomes everything else. Do you not think I am right, Rudolph?" she added, turning to her husband.

"You are always right," he replied, with a lover-like gesture that drove the colonel to distraction; "and in this case you are doubly right. Genius, rather than beauty, is the chief charm in the face of an actress."

"You may have both," said Isabel Hyde, "as in the case of La Diva."

"Ah, then," laughed Colonel Lennox, "all the world gives in, and worships."

"If a beautiful face has a foolish expression," said Lady Castlemaine, "no one cares for it."

The colonel smiled without speaking.

"Why are you smiling?" asked Lady Castlemaine.

"I was just thinking," he replied, "of a friend of mine. He is a fine, stalwart man. I believe he is one of the finest men in England, and he was a great beauty-worshipper—very critical, too. We used to say that he would never marry until the Venus de Medici came to life. He did marry—the plainest, the most commonplace little brown lady ever seen; she has brown eyes, brown hair, a brown complexion, and is in every way the reverse of beautiful, but he worships her, and thinks there is no one so lovely."

"And the moral of that story?" interrupted Lady Castlemaine.

"The morals of my stories are the worst and weakest part of them."

"The same as they are of yourself," thought Lord Castlemaine; but he kept the thought to himself.

Colonel Lennox looked at the beautiful countess, and continued—

"The moral to this one particular story is, that not two people judge of beauty alike, and that every person has his or her own standard."

"Mine is a high one," said Lady Castlemaine, and she looked with loving eyes at her husband; a glance which Colonel Lennox saw, and which made him gnash his teeth; a glance which Isabel Hyde saw, and which sent a chill through her heart.

"My standard is also the highest," said Colonel Lennox, with a low bow to Lady Castlemaine; and if ever a husband looked black it was his lordship.

"I think," he said, "that very few people know what real beauty is. Genius is grand; the soul shining in a face makes it fair; but moral beauty is the best beauty of all."

Colonel Lennox sighed, and thought the very idea wearisome.

He heartily wished that his lordship had kept away; the interview which he had promised himself with the beautiful countess had no practical enjoyment while the husband stood like a grim sentinel there.

Then "Hernani" ended. Lady Castlemaine rose.

"I am always dazed after listening long to music," she said, and there was something very strange in the expression of her face.

Quick as lightning Colonel Lennox held out his arm, before Lord Castlemaine had time to move.

"Permit me?" he said.

She could not refuse; she could not abruptly turn from him and take her husband's arm.

She moved slowly away with him. Isabel laid the tips of her fingers on Lord Castlemaine's arm.

"I wonder," she said, "how many times we have been down this staircase together."

He made no answer.

"What a magnificent pair they make!" cried Isabel, pretending to be seized by some irresistible impulse.

"Who? Of whom are you speaking?" asked Lord Castlemaine, suddenly.

"Lady Castlemaine and Colonel Lennox," she replied. "He is so tall, so strong, so dark. She is so slender and so fair. They look well together."

Lord Castlemaine felt too angry to make any reply.

That anyone should dare to connect the name of his beautiful young wife with that of Colonel Lennox, seemed to him an outrage.

He might be a magnificent officer, he might be one of the great heroes of the Zulu war, but he did not bear the character of a moral man, and he should never be a friend of his wife's.

By the light of the lamps in the crush room, Isabel saw the pallor of his face, but there was no pity in her heart for him.

What had she suffered, and who had pitied her? Let him suffer. Now it was his turn.

Not a word was spoken; it was a curiously silent quartette.

Colonel Lennox led Lady Castlemaine to the carriage; he made the most profound bow to her and to Miss Hyde, one many shades less profound to Lord Castlemaine, then retired.

Not one word of him did Lord Castlemaine utter.

He talked of Patti—as who does not when one has seen her—of his friend from Canada, of the opera, but not one word of Colonel Lennox.

Isabel listened, anxiously waiting for the name, but she never heard it. Lord Castlemaine did not care to say what he had to say before a stranger.

During the remainder of the evening there was was no word.

Lady Castlemaine sat down to the piano and played over most of the beautiful airs from 'Hernani."

Lord Castlemaine praised them. Miss Hyde wasted some little time in speculating whether most actresses did or did not go to Heaven.

Lord Castlemaine laughed, although he did not quite approve.

"What an unreal life it must be," said Lady Castlemaine. "After all, no life is worth living that is not straight and true."

CHAPTER XXV.

A WILYUL WOMAN.

WHILST Gertrude and Isabel were chatting of this and that, Lord Castlemaine preserved an almost utter silence.

Now and again the young wife cast a furtively-anxious glance at her husband, which her arch enemy was not very slow to see.

The terrible longing for revenge on this innocent woman who trusted her so wholly had grown almost to a frenzy, and there were times when Isabel Hyde would grow sick with horror lest this longing should end in madness.

She recalled the days of her childhood—so pure, and now, oh, so far away!—the joys of early maidenhood, the first sense of pride in her own wonderful beauty, the beauty which had failed to bring Rudolph to her feet.

But this night she felt only a passionate, fiendish joy in the knowledge that the cloud, "once no bigger than a man's hand," now almost covered the sky.

Gradually Gertrude's fair face lost its brightness, and the familiar look of pride made her sweet mouth hard in its curve, her blue eyes cold.

"The leaven is working," Isabel thought, and then protesting she was tired, she rose and went to her room; so husband and wife were alone.

Rudolph took up his paper, and seemed engrossed in it; Gertrude toyed nervously with her fan, and at last found voice to say—

"How have I offended you, Rudolph?"

He looked into her face with grave and searching eyes.

"Is it possible you do not know?"

"Not only possible, but true," with a soupcon of defiance in her tones, because, she fancied he was treating her badly.

"Will you tell me how you became acquainted with Colonel Lennox?"

"Certainly. I met him at Lady Morgan's," replied Lady Castlemaine.

"And why was I kept in ignorance of the acquaintance thus begun?"

"Really, you cannot suppose I keep an account of all the folks I meet."

"For my benefit?—no; but it is decidedly curious you should not mention this 'hero of a hundred fights,'" said his lordship.

"And why curious?" each moment growing harder under the sense of his injustice.

"I have never yet found you so reticent. I had always an idea that candor, and not deceit, was your chief characteristic."

"I have yet to learn how I have deceived you."

"Can you deny that you have?"

A ready and emphatic reply rose to her lips, but remained unspoken, because she saw clearly she had done wrong; but pride forbade the confession, and she only said carelessly—

"Colonel Lennox was a guest here the other day. He came in the hope of meeting you. It is not my fault that your acquaintance dates only from to-night."

The Castlemaine temper was rising; and, yet, because of the love he bore her, Rudolph restrained himself a little longer.

"I do not wish to improve that acquaintance," he said, coldly; "and I forbid you to exchange more than the merest courtesies with Colonel Lennox."

"You forbid!" she cried, quickly. "Since when have you made yourself master of my actions and words?"

"Since the day you became my wife," coldly. "I presume I have some authority over you."

Authority! The word was unfortunate; it roused all Gertrude's pride and passion.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE AGED.—Make the Christmas a glad time for the aged. Let each child, even the baby, have its little tribute to bring. Let the dear old heart know that its own gift, however simple, is prized and expected by every one of the household band. Help the trembling hands that may have grown slow to fashion the dainty miracles of needlework. Keep all the secrets of what she is going to give to this, that, or the other friend. Go patiently on the shopping jaunts, even if the feet are slow, and the eyes take a great deal of time in searching for "just the right thing." Aim for the day when grandmother is no longer here to "do" for us or to be "done" for! Let us remember how surely that day is coming nearer; and that, to make her thoroughly happy and conscious of how dear and necessary she is, is our way of beguiling the angel to linger in the home.

As the truest joy comes always from the consciousness of power to bless, so the more fully we can convince the aged of the blessing they are to us through their experience and their presence, and through their angelhood, that has so often been born in their sorrows, the more we shall minister to them. They are often afraid of becoming useless, conscious of failing powers, fearful of being in the way, or casting a shadow on the household mirth. See to it, dear young friends, that on this day of all days of the year they may be made to know how much we love and need the light of the faded faces, and assure them by every gentle attention that Christmas would not be Christmas without the "angel in the house."

THE business of printing the huge signs upon fences and barns which assault the eye in all parts of the country is in the hands of a few contractors in New York and Chicago. One firm in New York spends from $10,000 to $20,000 a year in this way, paying from one and one-half to two cents a square foot for the work. The bigger the sign the better. Many can be found reaching 200 feet in length, and the biggest of all (at Newark, Ohio), is more than 800 feet long and contains only one word.

Bric-a-Brac.

SLIPPERS AND SHOES.—These are thrown at a bride when she leaves the house of her parents to indicate that she has left the house for good. In Turkey it is the bridegroom who comes in for this shower. In Anglo-Saxon marriages the father delivered the bride's shoes to the bridegroom who touched the bride on the head with it to show his authority.

WHEN IN PRISON.—There is a remarkable peculiarity about the mocking-bird, which will be novel to some readers. When the young mocking-birds are captured for rearing indoors, the cages are frequently exposed to allow the old birds to feed the young. The parents will do this for several days, but when they find they cannot recover their offspring they poison them by dropping a little berry of the black ash into the cage. Murder, rather than imprisonment for life, is evidently their notion. But perhaps this is a traveler's tale.

THE BIRD SPIDER.—The bird spider of tropical America, according to a French writer, has a body as much as four and one-fourth inches long, or a diameter of seven inches with the legs extended, and is the largest of the several hundred known species of spiders. Its nest resembles those of the large caterpillars of France, and consists of a beautiful white silken tissue of several thick layers, and strengthened by very strong threads capable of arresting a small bird. In the centre are placed the eggs, perhaps fifteen hundred or two thousand in number. The creature is very powerful, and is provided with formidable instruments of attack, enabling it to destroy not only young birds and adult humming birds but large lizards and reptiles.

FLIRTING WITH WAX.—Flirtations in sealing-wax are the latest idea. Red is for business only; black wax is for mourning and condolence; pink for congratulations, and white for wedding invitations. Blue means love, and the color is used in various tints to mark the different stages of affection. Variegated colors are said to indicate conflicting emotions. Two other things are being tried by the stationers to make wax-work expensive and fashionable. They are beginning to use thimbles to bear seals, and hope to make some designs a popular craze. Then scented waxes are being imported from Paris, with a variety of colors, more or less desirable and costly. It is said one French firm makes wax, the perfume of which, when burning, will fill a room, and last for hours about the envelope.

A TRAGEDY.—A woman ran out of a house in Detroit the other day, crying 'fire' as loud as she could yell. A pedestrian who was passing by sprang up the steps and into the hall, and being unable to see or smell smoke he turned to the gasping and excited woman and asked: "Where is the fire? I can't see any signs of one." "I—I didn't mean fire! I—I meant murder!" she replied. "Is there a man in the house?" "No, sir." "Who tried to murder you?" "Oh, I didn't mean murder, I guess; but the awfullest, biggest rat you ever set eyes on chased our cat across the kitchen and then stood and glared at me, like a tiger thirsting for blood! Oh! you had better turn on a fire alarm and let 'em kick in all the doors and break in all the windows and flood the house. The rat must be killed before he commits some terrible deed!"

A FALSE LOVER.—The curious hold superstition has upon the minds of the Chinese is very well illustrated by the proceedings taken by a Chinese damsel when a lover proves false to his vows. When the world is at rest, at two o'clock in the morning, the woman rises. She dons a white robe and high sandals, or clogs. Her coif is a metal tripod, in which are thrust three lighted candles; around her neck she hangs a mirror, which falls upon her bosom; in her left hand she carries a small straw figure—the effigy of her faithless lover—and in her right hand she grasps a hammer and nails, with which she fastens the figure to one of the sacred trees that surround the shrine. Then she prays for the death of the traitor, vowing that if her petition be heard she will herself pull out the nails which now offend the god by wounding the mystic tree. Night after night she comes to the shrine, and each night she strikes in two more nails, believing that every nail will shorten her lover's life; for the god, to save his tree, will surely strike him dead.

PECULIARITIES OF THE PUG.—The pug dog has for years been an especial favorite with the ladies. He is too big a fool to succeed with the men, and too ugly to become a great pet of children. The pug is all right when you understand him. But that is a difficulty. He loves society and cannot exist unless he is in the company of those he loves. His smutty snub-nosed face is full of expression to his mistress, but impassible as a gargoyle to strangers. One of the greatest treats in life is to see a pug dog attack a beetle. His eyes appear to drop out of his head as he timidly advances first a paw, and then his nose, to test the strength of the enemy. If the beetle gives him a pinch, he makes a strategic move to the rear in a sort of hollow square, squinting, sneezing, and barking all the way. The pug's attack on a cat is diplomatic, and is generally made tail first. Instinct tells him the cat has not a vital part to claw at when approached in that way. The pug is never hungry. He only eats when fussed or coaxed, and scorns to break his fast before mid-day. He is always too fat, and generally suffers from asthma at an early age. He will not make friends with strangers, and has more jealousy in his composition than a Spanish belle. Nothing on earth can snore in so many keys as a pug dog.

THREE LITTLE BIRDS.

BY PHILIP THYNE.

Oh, three little birds on a bramble spray!
Each flew to find him a nest:
There was one went rarely over the sea;
And one flew straight for the North Countrie;
But the third
Little bird,
He winged his way to the watery West,
Where one that I love sits sighing.

Oh for the withering bramble spray,
And the bird that sleeps in the nest!
There is one in a castle over the sea;
And one in a place in the North Countrie;
But the third
Little bird,
He sings at a lattice far in the West,
Where one that I love lies dying.

Ah me, for the thorny bramble spray
And the weary bird in his nest!
There is one that dreams of the silver sea;
And one looks over the North Countrie:
But the third
Little bird,
He sings o'er a grave in the silent West,
Where one that I love is lying.

To Love and Honor.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DOLLY'S LUCK," "PEGGY," "TWO BRIDAL EVES," "A SHOCKING SCANDAL," "THE WYCHFIELD HORROR," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VIII.

IT is all true. Oh, Frank, dear forgive me!"

"There is a barrier between us?"

"There is a barrier between us," she repeats mechanically, gazing up at him with dim misty eyes. "Yes, a barrier that can never be removed."

His face changes then so suddenly that she springs forward and lays one hand upon his wrist, with the pleading passionate cry—

"Frank—dear, dear Frank, forgive me! I never know, I never guessed."

He lifts his head, and, though the pain lingers, and a gray pallor has crept over the healthy bronze of his skin, all the angry scorn that so hurt her has vanished from the kind and frank blue eyes.

"Forgive you?" he echoes gently. "Nay rather forgive my own egregious vanity, cousin Cressida. I forgot I was a cousin, and so entitled to privileges that turned my foolish head. When I saw that you, so cold and distant to all others, were kind and frank to me, I thought—no matter what I thought—the fault was all my own. Do not look so white and frightened, Cressida dear.

"We shall be friends still, friends always, I hope; and some day"—with a tolerably successful attempt at a smile—"some day I hope to extend that friendship to the lucky fellow who has won your love."

Her lips quiver for a moment, then the tears rush blindly to her eyes, and the good brave face she has learned to know so well is blotted from her gaze.

How good he is, how generous, how true and loyal a gentleman!

How safe and happy her life might have been if only they had met before!

The thought breaks from her in a little heart-wrung cry.

"Oh, stay," she says imploringly, "do not go like that! At least I owe it to you to tell the whole truth, and, however much it costs, however much you may blame and scorn me, you shall hear it all."

He comes back; but there is a look of trouble and reluctance on his frank face, as though he doubted the wisdom of yielding to her wish.

"I am here, Cressida," he answers gently; "but there is no need of explanation, dear. I fully understand your kindness to me was kindness only, in no way trenching on the rights of the man you love."

"The man I love!" she repeats, her great brown eyes flashing with fierce bewildering scorn. "There is no such man. Believe me Frank, there is no man on earth one half so dear to me as you!"

The clouds pass swiftly from his face, which is illumined with a sudden sunshine.

"My darling, then there is no barrier that can withstand my love!" he cries exultantly, and would draw the slender form within his strong arms; but she shrinks from his touch, and something in her steadfast look once more chills and disconcerts him.

The joy of his face finds no reflection in hers, which is very white, almost stern in its set gravity.

It is not the face of a girl hearing and answering a declaration of love, but of a woman passing through a mighty struggle, in which all her powers of nerve and will are tested to the uttermost, of a proud woman passing through the valley of humiliation and shame.

Francis Carmichael watches that silent struggle with hot angry eyes.

Then, man-like, he feels that he can bear anything but suspense, and can bear that no longer—so breaks the painful silence with the impatient cry—

"Cressida, are you mocking—are you playing with me? For Heaven's sake, speak or let me go!"

"Wait!"—she lays one hand on the tall chair-back to steady herself for the final effort, and presses the other just above her heart to still its painful throbbing. Then she goes on quietly—

"Frank, do you remember being in Paris with Lady Gordon and Florence two years ago this summer?"

"Of course! I came to fetch Florence from her convent, and take her over to the governor. But what has that to do with us, with this present question?"

"Wait!" she cries again, almost imploringly. "Do you remember the night before you and Florence left? You were on the river and——"

"And was lucky enough to pick up some unhappy girl who had thrown herself into it! I don't know how you heard the story; but it is true enough. She had a narrow escape, whoever she was, poor soul!"

He speaks absently, half forgetting the irrelevance of the question and the smarting pain of the moment in the buried memories her words awake.

"Did you ever learn who the poor soul was—ever know anything of the life you saved?"

"Never. We went off the next morning, you know; I had no time to make inquiries; they took the poor thing to some home for English girls, and Lady Gordon promised to visit the place, and, if it was a deserving case, to try to help her. I suppose it was not, as she never mentioned the matter again; but——— Good Heavens, Cressida"—his look and manner changing with electric suddenness—"why do you ask these questions? What was that poor girl to you?"

"Much!"—her face is absolutely colorless her eyes are black with pain. "It was my life you saved, Frank; I was that forlorn and wretched girl."

For a moment there is nothing but blankest incredulity in Frank Carmichael's pale face.

By not the wildest freak of the imagination can he reconcile the two figures presented to his thoughts—Lady Gordon's beautiful, stately grandchild, his own proud and pure cousin, and the desperate hunted creature who had dared all the mystic terrors of eternity in her despair of life, and, but for him, would have ended all her earthly woes in the dark deep waters of the Seine.

No, it is impossible—clearly, hopelessly impossible; and yet, even as he negatives the idea decisively, there comes to him a swift remembrance of the cold wet face that lay upon his breast, the long dripping hair of palest gold that fell across his arms two years ago.

And, with a pain so sharp that it almost stops his breath, truth comes home to him at last.

The face he looked upon in the Paris moonlight with no more than a passing human pity for the young life so terribly marred, the face he looks upon now with a mortal agony in his kind frank eyes, are one and the same.

What, then, is the terrible secret in Cressida Leigh-Gordon's life?

He cannot ask the question; he cannot look at her more.

With a long-drawn breath that is almost a sob, he sinks into the nearest chair, and covers his bronzed face with his strong shaking hands.

In an instant she drops upon her knees beside him, all things forgotten at sight of his keen pain but the desire to console him and, if possible, to clear herself in his eyes.

"Frank, dearest Frank," she cries with pathetic eagerness, twisting her own white fingers round the strong brown hands, and trying to draw them down, "do not condemn me unheard; you know nothing yet!"

He raises his head then, and she is shocked to see how pale and drawn his face has grown in those few moments of intense agony.

His deep blue eyes—her mother's eyes, and the only real beauty of Francis Carmichael's face—look at her with a sort of terror.

The terrible shock of the late revelation has altogether unnerved him; he dreads all and hopes nothing from the story she has to tell.

"I know enough," he says, with a deep compassion that is as condemnatory in its way as the fiercest anger or the coldest scorn—"I know, poor child, how terrible life must have grown to you when you sought refuge from it in a suicide grave."

The red blood mounts swiftly to her forehead, and the sweet lips quiver; but there is none of the shame he dreads to see in the clear steadfast eyes that do not shrink from his.

"It was so terrible, it turned my brain, and—I do not know—I think I wished to die; I cannot remember that night quite clearly. But, Frank, there was no sin in my past, nothing that I could blame myself or blush for, only a great and cruel wrong that blackens all my life with an undeserved shame. Listen, dear, and you shall judge me for yourself."

Then, very quietly and clearly, with an earnestness that finds the right word at the right moment and gives her a simple and convincing eloquence, she tells him the brief story of her life—her lonely unloved girlhood, the glamor cast over the simple schoolgirl by the brilliant Frenchman who taught her that she was no more a child, the sudden closing of the Misses Smerdon's school, the circumstances that led her guardians to urge on her hasty and imprudent marriage—her one year of weary and neglected wedded life, the summons to Paris, and the terrible shock awaiting her there.

The young man hears it all, a wonderful chaos of conflicting passions struggling for the mastery within him.

Deep heartfelt relief, passionate pity, burning indignation, each in turn sways him, and all are swallowed up in a loyal and tender love.

"Cressida, my poor wronged darling, my innocent love, can you ever forgive me?" he cries, raising the slender hands to his quivering lips in reverent and remorseful passion.

"Forgive you!"

There is, alas, more—far more than forgiveness in the sad liquid eyes!

"But for you I should never have known grandmamma or this happy and peaceful home. She came the next day, true to her promise to you, to see after the girl you had rescued, and she found her daughter's child."

"And she knows all?" the young man asks, after a momentary pause.

"Yes; she knows all, from Miss Smerdon, with whom she at once communicated who was present at my marriage, and whose sister was married at the same time and place. And now, Frank," she finishes, with a pitiful little smile—"now that I have broken my promise and told you all, say that, though we must part forever, you can think of me with pity and kindness still."

He looks his answer—no more; and for the first time her eyes droop under his gaze, her heart flutters wildly, and a faint tinge of color steals back to the lily whiteness of her skin.

There is love, ardent, yearning, and unquenchable in that long earnest gaze; but, when he speaks, his words are sharp and stern.

"Cressida, you have not yet told me that man's name."

A strong shiver runs through her. But she looks up at him with an unshakable determination.

"And I will not tell you, Frank, my dear"—laying her hand pleadingly upon his arm; "it is better that you should never know it. He is dead to me and I to him—from the bottom of my heart I can thank Heaven for that; but he may cross your path, and I tremble to think of what might pass between you."

"Very well," he says quietly; "I will learn in some other way. Be reasonable, Cressida. If you were not the woman I love, I am bound to protect the child of my mother's sister. If he had not come between me and dearest hope of earthly happiness, I am bound to avenge the wrong done to one of my own kin. Tell me his name."

"No," she says, almost in a whisper; "he has married now, has repented, perhaps; it is all as though it had never been."

"Is it?"

There is almost an exultant ring in the quick eager question.

Before she even guesses at his purpose, he has drawn her closely to him in a passionate embrace.

"Is it as though it had never been? Say that, Cressida, prove it by giving your life to me, and, my darling, I will vex you with no more questions, I will be silent on this point forever!"

Of all she has endured, the cruellest pang comes to Cressida now.

She loves the man who holds her in such an inexorable clasp, whose eyes plead so passionately with hers, whose daring lips have used another eloquence than that of words.

She loves him—she knows that now—as she has never loved before, will never love again, with the whole passion of her womanhood, with the love that is her doom. But in proportion to her love is the intensity of her shame that he should so misconstrue and insult her, should thus tacitly acquiesce in the verdict that makes her less than a wife.

For a moment she struggles vainly in his strong clasp; then, hiding her crimsoning face, she breaks into a tempest of bitter tears.

Mr. Carmichael releases her instantly, his face growing stern and pale.

He is angry with himself, and angry too with her.

"I beg your pardon," he says, with a savage kind of humility. "You still consider yourself to be that scoundrel's wife, and I retain my right to find and punish him."

Cressida cannot answer, for at this moment the door opens and Lady Gordon enters the room.

CHAPTER IX.

THE handsome old lady comes quickly across to where Frank stands; she does not seem to notice the very overt agitation of her grandchildren; she is herself to the full as pale and distressed as they are.

"Florence!" she says, seizing Mr. Carmichael's arm and speaking with a painful sort of gasp. "Oh, Frank, what will your father say?"

Absorbed in his own moody thought, the young man has hardly heeded her entrance hardly hears what she says.

But with a quicker intelligence Cressida reads the dazed horror in the proud old face, sees the slip of paper in the shaking old hand, and makes a quick guess at the truth.

"It is a letter from Florence; read it, Frank," she says, in a rapid whisper, as she leads the trembling old lady to a large chair.

Frank Carmichael obeys, that is, he takes the paper; but hardly have his eyes rested on the first lines when he grinds his teeth savagely and crumples the blotted letter to a ball in his fierce clasp.

"She has gone!" he cries, with a bitter laugh. "That scoundrel Frenchman has followed her to England, and she—great Heavens, that my sister should do this!"

"You must follow her, Frank, and at once, thank Heaven, there is still time for that! The letters were not to have been given to us till the morning; but she had hardly left the house when her maid came to me with a full confession. They are to leave this station by the eight o'clock train, so you have still half an hour in which to follow and catch them."

"Thank Heaven!" cries the young man fervently, yet, there is a grim determination mingling with his thanksgiving too. "I will go at once. If I know myself, this wicked headstrong young girl shall return with me. And, as for Monsieur St. Just ——"

He pauses significantly, words fail him to express his opinion of the man who had so warped his young sister's mind; but the pause is strangely and terribly filled.

A scream, shrill, piercing, agonized in its intensity, breaks from Lady Gordon's pale lips, and Cressida stands before him, looking, but for the vivid anguish of her eyes, like one fresh risen from the dead.

"St. Just! St. Just!" the former repeats wildly. "Who is he, Frank? What is his Christian name?"

The young man looks from one to the other with angry frightened eyes.

"He is the man who came between Florence and my best friend, a man to whom my father forbade her to speak, a man I horsewhipped in Port Elizabeth; and his name is Isidore St. Just!"

"It is the same!" Lady Gordon says in a terror-stricken whisper. "Oh, Cressida, it is——"

"Hush, grandmother!" Cressida says quietly. Her face is pale, but her eyes are bright, her every nerve is braced for action. She would not break down now were the pain at her heart twice as fierce and sore. "Take me with you, Frank," she pleads. "You will not refuse me this great favor, dear? Let me come with you to the station."

He listens with a wordless pain in his blue eyes.

All seems mystery and misery to the frank-hearted gentleman.

"Come, if you will, Cressida!" he says sadly. "I cannot guess your reason; but come!"

She just touched his clenched hand with her fingers, but the action is a caress that thrills through his whole frame.

"You will never be sorry, dear," she says earnestly; "for I know that, without scene or struggle, I shall bring Florence, poor, misguided Florence, back."

He says no more.

By the time she has donned her hat and scarf the carriage is at the door, and in a few seconds more they are driving very swiftly and silently through the clear summer night.

* * * * * *

And in the meantime, oblivious alike of the misery they leave behind them and the grim fate that is tracking them down, the runaway pair are pacing the narrow platform of the little rose-grown country station, anxiously waiting for the coming of the train that is to bear them to a larger liberty, and a new love-lit life.

At least this is what Florence Carmichael pictures to her foolish fancy as she clings to her lover's right arm and looks up into his dark handsome face with romantic adoration.

"You will never blame me for this, Isidore—never remind me that I disobeyed my father and turned my back upon my home, all for your sake."

She puts the question, not coquettishly, but with a real deep anxiety.

She is feverishly excited, recklessly gay; but in heart Florence is not happy.

Remorse and self-disgust are stirring within her already, and she wants the charmer's voice to lull them once more into their dangerous sleep.

Monsieur St. Just smiles fondly into the soft dark eyes, presses the little hand against his side, and knows his easy victory is won.

His only sensation is a cynical triumph. He knows the money-value of his prize, and he tastes already the sweets of his victory over the proud father and brother who had rejected his pretensions with such intolerable scorn.

"Blame you!" he echoes, with a fervent tenderness that does great credit to his histrionic abilities. "My beautiful queen, I will thank you to my life's end for your love and trust in me. Hark!"—dropping suddenly from high-flown fervor to practical common-place. "It must be later than I thought; there is the signal for the train!"

"Not ours," Florence answers, with a careless backward glance at the drooping arm of the semaphore; "that is the signal for the down express, which is due in five minutes more."

Isidore mentally consigns the down express and every other object that stands between him and the journey on which he is so anxious to start, to very speedy perdition.

It is a soft misty evening; the moon is the slenderest crescent, and the stars are just beginning to twinkle faintly through a gray vaporous haze.

They do not know that any one is with them till a hand closes with a vice-like clasp upon Isidore's shoulder, and Florence looks with startled eyes into her brother's stern set face.

He does not address her, though he draws her quickly to him, feeling as though he drew her from under the trampling feet of some infuriated animal.

It is on the cowed and frightened Frenchman that his eyes rest with a blazing scorn and anger, it is to him that he speaks in tones of bitterest contempt.

"Coward and thief! Could neither my whip nor the money with which my father bribed you teach you to keep your distance—or your word?"

Isidore St. Just is at heart a coward; but he is at bay now, and submission will serve him no more.

He sees Florence wince and whiten at her brother's scathing words—sees how eagerly she looks to him to deny the charge they bring—and knows he cannot.

"Tut, mon cher!" he says, forcing a smile to his white lips, and looking away from Miss Carmichael with an uneasy glitter in his restless dark eyes. "We are not at the theatre of which your talk savors too much. You have essayed to bully me, to entrap your sister, to force us both to submit to your arrogant will! Eh, bien"—with the facile shrug he uses so eloquently—"we have counter-schemed and counter-plotted! I do not deny the charge. Why should I? Your proverb says that in love and war all things are fair. We love so deeply, mademoiselle and I, that we have dared take the future in our own hands, and defy you all. She is no child, but a woman, strong, brave and independent. If she keep her faith to me, who shall come between us?"

"I!"

It might be a voice falling from the stars, so very strangely clear and solemn is the sound.

It might be an accusing angel, or a woman risen from the dead, who comes forward from the shadows and stands in Isidore's path, with the faint moonbeams falling with ghostly effect upon the white dress and whiter stern-set face.

"I—Cressida, your wife!" she repeats, in the same thrillingly monotonous voice, and moves a step nearer still.

Then a sudden mad terror seizes the guilty man's soul, his eyes glare frenziedly round, and the clammy drops of a mortal agony cluster thickly on his brow.

That he stands in the presence of flesh and blood he never for a second dreams.

All his life he has scoffed at religion, and now——

"Isidore," she cries, bewildered by the stony horror of his look.

The sound breaks the spell that holds him; and, with a wild scream of abject terror, he flings his arms above his head, jumps from the platform, and dashes across the line, and then——

The scream is horribly echoed; there is a shrill whistle, a rush and roar of steam, and then the down express is flashing past on its journey, and all that is left of Isidore St. Just is a crushed and mangled fragment of humanity.

* * * * * *

"Cressida my darling, it is the one wish of my heart. You'll not let me die with that ungratified?"

Lady Gordon looks at her granddaughter's face with fond fading eyes.

All the hoarded love of the proud woman's life is lavished on Cressida.

If she can but see the patient sadness vanish from the brown eyes, if she can but leave her grandchild happy, she will die content.

And she thinks she knows where that happiness lies.

In the three years that have passed since freedom came to Cressida, through Isidore St. Just's terrible death, she has never ceased to hope that she would yet be Frank Carmichael's wife.

The hope that fills her she has imparted to her grandson, and Frank has for the second time told his love, and met with a firm but grateful refusal, which, protest as he may, he is compelled to accept.

"You are all that is generous and good and noble," Cressida says, when, a year after the event that has shadowed all their memories so darkly, he pleads with her again. "But it cannot be. I am not fit to be your wife. Go, dearest Frank, throw your whole heart into your work, and—forget me——"

He cannot doubt her steady purpose, despite the tears that sparkle in the soft dark eyes, despite the sudden quiver of his lips.

He knows he must submit. But forget her?

"I will try," he says, half-savagely, half-sadly. And then he goes; and for two years they do not meet. And the ache in Cressida's heart grows sharper, and life grows grayer and emptier every day.

She feels very old, though she is not yet three-and-twenty, and envies her grandmother the painless fading that means the laying down of all burdens and the ending of all cares.

She stands now at the foot of the quaintly-carved couch on which Lady Gordon lies, with dreamy eyes, and face a shade paler than is her wont.

It is hard to refuse that pitifully urged request, and yet——

"Cressida, if Frank asks you again, you will accept him? I ask no sacrifice, my darling, for you love him, and you have been three years a widow."

"Yes, I love him," the girl cries, a strange thrill of triumph in her sweet voice—"how dearly he will never know! It almost breaks my heart to refuse you; but how can I do this thing? If Florence, whom you call light unstable and frivolous, thinks her life so stained and darkened by—by that man that she can never marry, think how much greater is the shadow over mine!"

She speaks with a painful agitation, and is as surprised as hurt to see the glad smile that lights Lady Gordon's pale withered face.

She turns instinctively round, and the next instant is clasped in Frank Carmichael's arms.

Vainly she struggles to escape; he bends his head to hers, his blue eyes are ablaze with triumph, his bronzed face radiant with joy.

"If that is all, my darling, my cause is more than won! Florence has seen the error of her ways; she will not let a schoolgirl's headstrong folly blight a woman's whole life. Next month she will be married to Clement Marshall, my father's aide-de-camp and right-hand man, who loved her before St. Just ever crossed her path. Now, Cressida, will you send me from you again?"

She does not answer; but she struggles no more.

She nestles contentedly against the strong heart that beats with so loyal a passion, and looks shyly up into the glad blue eyes; then in a flash she knows it is all real—real as the strong arms that enfold her, real as the betrothal kiss. She starts from his arms then, blushing rosy-red with a sweet happy shame.

"Children, come here," Lady Gordon says feebly; and, hand in hand, they kneel beside her. "Frank, she is yours!"

He meets the eager eyes, with a proud happy smile.

"Mine to love and honor for evermore!" he says triumphantly. "She shall pass out of the shadows now, grandmother; you may trust her to me."

"I do so gladly," the old lady answers, with a little gasp; and then the pale lips move and the slender hands flutter momentarily over the bowed brown and golden heads. And Cressida knows that as earnest a benediction as earthly love can frame has rested upon his second betrothal of hers; and, knowing this, she ventures to remember that she is young and fair, loved and loving, and to dream of happiness once more.

[THE END.]

Checkmated.

BY OLIVE BELL.

MAUDIE TREVELYAN'S black eyes were flashing with mingled jealousy and anger, as she stood beside the lounge over which Georgie May's new dress was lying—a dainty white Swiss, trimmed with Valenciennes-edged ruffles, sheer and pure as foam-sparkles.

"Of course you like it, Maude? You couldn't help admiring it, could you?"

Georgie's glad, eager voice was so sweet, so girlish, that its very gay freshness stung Maude Trevelyan.

"Oh, yes, it is very elegant indeed—rather elaborate, for the occasion."

Georgie touched the soft material tenderly.

"White is never too elaborate, Maude; and it cost so little—nothing for the making. Do gratify me by praising it unreservedly, Maude! Tell me you think it will be becoming and stylish for the reception at Holman Hall!"

She was such a sweet, honest little pleader, not in the least ashamed of wanting to be told her new dress was lovely, and when she lifted her bright little face, with its clear complexion and laughing gray eyes, Maude Trevelyan could hardly refrain from striking it.

For, since Sydney Elvinly had shown himself somewhat fascinated by those same sweet, honest eyes and Georgie's pretty winsome ways, Maude had known what it meant to hate with a cordial hatred and desperate jealousy.

From the very first, Maude had so greatly admired Mr. Elvinly, and he had seemed to equally admire her.

He was very handsome and attractive, and just such a gentleman as would naturally attract such a dashing, stylish girl as Maude Trevelyan.

She herself was as pretty as beautiful dark eyes and luxuriant blue-black hair, cream and rose complexion, and a proud, well-cut mouth, could make her.

It had been a grand triumph at first to Maude, when Mr. Elvinly had chosen her as a special recipient of his attentions, although he was by no means exclusive.

Then the triumph had changed to happiness, as she found out more and more of his good qualities, and his sweetness of temper, and grace of mind; and Maude had come to love him with all her strong, passionful nature—had bestowed upon him, unsolicited, her heart.

Then, right in the midst of all the happiness she was experiencing, Georgie May intruded—plain, yet bright little Georgie, with her unassuming ways, so winsomely sweet, her honest, joyous nature.

She had come to spend the winter with her cousin, who was one of Maude's best friends, and naturally, in the course of time, met Mr Elvinly.

And then—it was evident to everyone that Sydney was attracted by the sweet charms of her manner, and that the two were good friends, although no one, even hot-headed jealous Maude, could accuse them of being aught more.

"But it will come to more! Mr. Elvinly is so delighted, with her, and she—sly little cat!—pretends she values his friendship only, when all the time she uses all her skill to entrap him."

Maude really meant what she had told herself, this bright morning, while she stood looking at Georgie's new dress, made to wear at the reception of which the girls had been talking for weeks, and which she knew would be so beautifully becoming to Georgie's fair, sweet face, with its thoughtful eyes, and her soft brown hair, that she wore so unlike the other girls wore theirs—no elaboration of crimps, and puffs, and braids, but parted over her pretty forehead, and drawn in loose, natural waves off her face to the back of her shapely head, where it was caught with a knot of some bright ribbon, then fell in three or four half-curling tresses to her waist.

And this fair, gentle girl was to go to the dance, and Sydney Elvinly would see her, and admire her, and single her out, perhaps, for special attention, and, likely enough, under the influence of her pretty, bright ways, make love to her.

It almost maddened Maude to think of it.

It was a matter of almost indifference to her that she would be equally well dressed and certainly handsomer than Georgie; she had no thought excepting that Georgie was her rival, and if she proved a successful one, Maudie's own misery was insured.

There were such thoughts as these trooping through Maude's brain as she stood looking at the foamy white silk dress.

Then, as she turned away, there was a flash in her eyes—a flash and a sparkle of satisfaction—for something had occurred to her almost like an inspiration; and her pretty, eager face was eloquent of it as she walked down the street.

"Georgie May shall not have the pleasure of wearing her new dress and fascinating people generally—and Sydney Elvinly in particular! She shall stay away from the reception at Holman Hall—I will keep her away! And then—once out of sight, I'll risk her being out of Mr. Elvinly's mind. I'll see to it that he has no chance to regret her absence."

Her eyes were bright with determination and excitement as she walked along, and were brighter still when she stepped into a telegraph office and wrote a message that read: "Come home at once," and that was signed with the initials "C. M."

Maude looked very pretty and bewitching as she handed her message through the operator's window.

"I want this sent to Marston Hall, Somerset, please, and then returned to this address. How much will it be?"

And after she had paid the double rates, she walked out of the office, feeling that, without committing any mortal sin, she had quite effectually prevented any intercourse between Sydney Elvinly and that Georgie May.

"Of course she'll think the despatch is from her brother, this 'Cal' whom she talks so much about, and she'll rush off home post haste. Once there, a hundred miles away, Miss Georgie won't return to finish the visit, while I—well the sun will shine, and I will make my hay. I will win Sydney Elvinly!"

And she went leisurely on home, quite content with her contemptible little game.

Several hours later, the telegram from Marston came to Georgie, alarming her, as telegrams have a trick of doing, and in this special instance adding to itself by its vagueness and terseness.

"I do wonder what can be the matter? It's from Cal, of course, and something terrible must have happened or they would never have sent for me. Oh, auntie! you don't suppose anything can be the matter with mamma?"

The sweet quivering lips were very piteous in their appeal to Mr. Elvinly, who had been there as the message came, and felt how blessed a pleasure it would be to take the dear girl to his heart and try to comfort her.

"You can't go before to-morrow morning at any rate, Georgie; so be patient and hope for the best."

"But it is such a long time to be in suspense—to be wondering and fearing! Mr. Elvinly, don't you think I might telegraph to know what is the matter?"

Mr. Elvinly sprang to his feet at once.

"Certainly, Miss Georgie. There is no need for you to be in a state of suspense all night and until you reach home to-morrow. I will run down to an office where an especial friend of mine is operator, and he'll pass a message of inquiry through and get an answer. Give me your brother's address please."

And he took it from her eager, trembling lips.

"All right—'Calvin May, Marston Hall, Somerset.' I'll be back as soon as I possibly can."

He saw the thankful look in her lovely, wistful eyes as he took her cold little hand in his.

"It may be only a trifling matter, after all, Georgie. At any rate, fretting won't help it."

He had never called her "Georgie" before, nor had he ever pressed her hand so warmly; and even amid the fear that was numbing her heart she thought with a great thrill of happiness, how splendid he was.

And Mr. Elvinly rushed off down to the very office where a few hours before, Maude Trevelyan had written and had despatched her sham message.

The same young fellow sat there, reading an evening newspaper, when Elvinly dashed in.

"Heigho, Brace! Busy? Wires clear for this?"

He pencilled his words on the blank, and thrust it in the window.

"That's all right, Syd. It'll go right on. Funny, isn't it? The last message I sent was to the same place and same name."

He began clicking the instrument.

But Elvinly went on talking.

"What—a telegram from here to Mr. Cal May? I declare, I know I've no business to ask, nor you to answer, but I'd like to know who it is in town who knows the Mays down in Somerset."

Mr. Brace was rapidly counting the words.

"One and three, Syd. It was Miss Trevelyan who sent it, to be re-telegraphed from Marston here. I sent the despatch down. Didn't the young lady get it."

Mr. Elvinly was looking at his friend while he spoke, with a quiet stern expression on his face.

He was surprised, somewhat bewildered and indignant at the poor joke he began to understand had been played on Georgie May.

He remembered her piteous, wistful face, her eyes bright with tears, her sweet pleading voice; and he grew almost desperately angry with Maude Trevelyan.

"A thousand thanks for your kindness, Frank. You have explained away a trouble and brightened things considerably in general. I won't send my telegram. Good night, old fellow!"

When returned to Miss Leighton's parlor, Georgie was there alone, waiting in nervous eagerness for the news from home.

She sprang to meet him, all her heart in her eyes.

"Oh, Mr. Elvinly! Please tell me at once! No matter what it is, I want to know."

He linked his arm in hers, and led her to a chair.

"There has been a mistake, Georgie. There has come no telegram for you from your family. Everything is all right with them. Everything will be all right with me, my darling, if you will only tell me you can love me! Georgie, little girl, have I surprised you? Had you no idea I meant to try to win you for my own little wife, darling?"

It certainly had taken her by surprise—this sudden, eager, loving declaration—and Mr. Elvinly knew it by the pallor on her cheeks the droop of her eyes, the little quiver that thrilled perceptibly over her.

And he knew, too his love was not unacceptable, by the happiness that crept over her downcast face, by the half-delighted, half-shy sweetness that was in her eyes as she raised them one little instant.

"Georgie, is it yes?"

His arms were around her now, his eyes looking at her burning cheeks.

"Oh, Mr. Elvinly it is such a sudden change from misery to happiness—perfect happiness; because—because I do dearly love you!"

* * * * * * *

And at the reception at Holman Hall, Maude Trevelyan not only wondered how it was that Georgie May had returned again to attend it, not only was hurt—justly hurt—and angered at Mr. Elvinly's cool courteousness, but also wondered, with rage and jealous pain, if the diamond on Georgie's finger was really her engagement ring.

She found out soon enough, but she never knew that her treacherous little trick had been discovered, although she was conscious of something that was for ever interposed between her and Sydney Elvinly's wife.

A MATTER OF CHOICE.—There has rarely been such a plethora of choice in the way of pretty presents for Christmas. The combination walking stick, containing a match-box and a cigarette holder, is just the thing for a gentleman; it has the exact appearance of a walking stick, and is not more bulky.

The match box closes with a spring hinge. Easels covered with plush are one of the knicknacks which make a drawing-room pretty and show to advantage the many little photographs and pictures that accumulate. Some new frames for photographs have an applique of china on the plush, birds have settled on the corners of some other plush frames, life-like canaries, love birds, parrakeets, pigeons, owls, and also kittens.

Telegram form-cases in morocco have a clock in the centre, with spaces for postcards &c.

Tourist writing-cases have been made this year in plush, and should be a joy for ever, as they certainly are things of beauty. A new photograph album is part and parcel of a stand, from which it turns down without becoming detached.

Photographs are inserted on the outside of the cover, and inside each page is illustrated. Appliques of brass works are applied to cigar cases, glove and jewel cases, and silk workbaskets.

Clocks, which go well, can be had in the centre of a metal repousse shield, surrounded by cans, spurs, and gauntlets, or the now so fashionable easel, or as a football. Sachets of quilted satin have, by way of ornament, a single kid glove sewn on the outside.

Useful morocco boxes, with the motto outside in gold letters, "A stitch in time," &c., contains work implements and materials packed in a very small space, while a similar one has hairpins.

The new cameo glass has been applied to scent-bottles in the form of a sword and a duck's head.

A new menu card is folded as an envelope, with for post mark the words "Bon appetit," and the stamp of the Republique Francaise in the corner.

Another is a diamond shape, in brown, blue, gold, and white, with a well-designed figure on each in fancy costume.

For sentimental present select one of the silver Edelweiss photograph frames, with flowers most faithfully modelled.

Some of the many new work-baskets are covered all over with fancy-chenille in bright colors.

The bonboneres in glass and metal are very pretty; the glass ones have floral patterns in relief, and the metal show many devices.

"TOMMY, my son, what are you doing there with your feet dangling in the water?"—"Trying to catch cold, 'ma, so that I may have some more of those cough lozenges you gave me yesterday."

YOUNG AND OLD.

BY CHARLES MACKAY.

And were they not the happy days
When Love and I were young—
When earth was robed in heavenly light,
And all creation sung?
When gazing in my true love's face
Through greenwood alleys lone,
I guessed the secrets of her heart
By whispers of mine own.

And are they not the happy days
When Love and I are old,
And silver evening has replaced
A morn and noon of gold?
Love stood alone 'mid youthful joy,
But now, by sorrow tried,
It sits and calmly looks to heaven
With angels at its side.

A Wife's Martyrdom.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A BROKEN WEDDING RING," "THORNS AND BLOSSOMS," "WHICH LOVED HIM BEST?" ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XLIV.

LADY LAURA WYNYARD had shown her husband one letter.

There was another and more explicit one which she carefully hid from him. It ran thus—

"Dearest Mamma,—I know that my leaving you in this manner will be a great sorrow and a great surprise. I cannot tell you why I am going; but you know that you may most safely trust me. Remember this, that my return depends entirely on yourself.

"When that unfortunate will which the Captain persuaded you to make is destroyed; I will come back at once, but not until then. I have thought of many plans by which you could let me know when this takes place, and the best, the safest, is by advertisement.

"I shall contrive to see the *Times* every day. When the will is destroyed, send the following words for insertion in the advertisement sheet of the *Times*—'Return without fear; I have done what you wished.' the hour in which I read those words I shall begin my journey home. Do not let any one see this letter; and, above all things, do not let the Captain learn that I know about the will. I shall soon see you again, my beloved mother, and then I will explain all that now must seem like a cruel mystery to you.

"From your loving child,
"ANGELA."

Lady Laura wondered even more when she read that note.

What could it mean? What connection could there be between the will she had made and Angela's leaving home?

Fortunately for her, not the faintest suspicion of the truth occurred to her. She was one of those dreamy creatures who seldom realize a thing unless it is put before them in startling colors or in very emphatic words.

Lady Laura Wynyard thought of the will she had made and of Angela's flight from home, but could not see how they bore upon each other.

If any one had pointed out to her that the will she had made gave her husband the greatest interest in her daughter's death, and that her own death would make him a rich man, she would have been roused at once to a sense of danger, to a perception of what might be passing around, to the knowledge of a terrible tragedy that was being played before her eyes while she herself was quite unconscious of it.

Fortunately she did not even oversо faintly dream of it.

Brilliant, graceful, and beautiful as she was, Lady Laura was not a clever woman.

She was sweet, gentle, and amiable, refined and sensitive; but no one would have described her as clever.

She was accomplished and well read, but she had little of that valuable quality that people call cleverness. She had the most implicit trust in Angela, and in some vague way that she could never explain even to herself she had long had a feeling that Angela was older, stronger, and wiser than herself; and she felt now that her daughter would not have done what she had without some urgent reason.

The best complexion was put upon Angela's absence, so as to avoid scandal.

The Captain, in speaking of Miss Rooden's departure as very sudden and unforeseen, was careful to add that she would join them when they went to town.

The secret of her mysterious flight did not get known in the neighborhood at all. All friends were told the same story—Miss Rooden had gone on a visit, and would join the Captain and Lady Laura Wynyard in town.

But, if the secret lay lightly on the household, it was a weighty burden on the minds of Lady Laura and her husband.

The Captain could not understand the occurrence; Angela had been so reticent with him.

"It is no love-affair," he said to himself—"I should not care so much if it were; she is not like other girls—she has never cared about lovers. For what can she have gone away? The matter has nothing to do with her mother; yet how the girl could have a secret from her I cannot imagine—they were so devoted to each other."

It was curious to see how this strong, usually careless man was affected by his stepdaughter's disappearance.

He did not sleep well; he did not eat well. His usual high spirits deserted him and he became moody and silent.

He was always asking himself how much did she know, had she any suspicions concerning him, had she found him out.

To him it seemed impossible that she could have discovered anything.

He had surrounded himself with precautions, he had made himself secure behind a whole rampart of explanations.

He had made it impossible that he should be taken by surprise.

She could never have the faintest suspicion of him, though he was bound to confess that he had not liked the look of her face on that morning when she declined to ride or to drive.

Had she known the secret of the will, he could have understood her conduct; but she did not know it.

"I am weak and foolish to trouble myself about the fancies of a girl—she has a thousand unknown to me."

But, when he was alone with his thoughts the same agitation, the same uneasy apprehension tortured him.

Had she found him out, and had she gone away to seek advice and strengthen her case? The fear haunted him.

The Captain was so unlike himself that he had no inclination to go up to town. It was of little use, he told himself, now that all his schemes were upset.

In the depths of his dark and desperate heart he had made his villainous plans. The first and foremost was the compassing of the death of Angela.

She was the one great barrier in his path.

Lady Laura was a fragile delicate woman whose long martyrdom, he saw, must soon end; her health and strength were failing daily.

Now, with Angela escaped from his power he realized that he was in an awkward position.

If anything happened to this delicate wife of his, the property would go to Angela; and the almost certain probability was that she would never either see him or share it with him in any way.

Then he would be a poor man. The will about which he had taken so much trouble would be absolutely valueless.

"I have mismanaged the whole most fearfully," he said to himself, with darkening brows; "I should have been more prompt in action. There is no one to blame but myself."

If Angela did not return, if she never fell into his power again, even the loss of his wife would not bring him one step nearer to Gladys Rane; the insurmountable barrier of poverty would still be between them.

It was such a complete downfall, such a complete crushing of all his plans, that he could not recover himself.

Notwithstanding all that had happened, he would have gone up to town but that Lady Laura fell ill of low fever, one of those subtle fevers that seem to wear the very life away, but yet cause very little outward show of illness.

He was careless enough of the opinion of the world in general, still even he did not like to leave his wife ill at Rood while he went up to town for a round of gaiety.

He was not the most pleasant of companions during those days, and the few ignorant people who talked about the Captain's devotion to his wife little dreamed how she trembled at the very sound of his footsteps, how she shuddered at the sound of his voice.

Outwardly his manner was negligently kind; but he knew how to make her heart ache with a veiled sarcasm, how, with a few careless words, to give her unutterable pain.

"If I am to suffer," he said to himself, "let her suffer too;" and he was base enough, mean enough to feel some relief when he could inflict pain on her.

He had forgotten, or rather he chose to forget, that he owed everything to her—money, luxury, magnificence—that all the ease he enjoyed, the splendor that surrounded him, came from her hands.

In the earlier days of their married life he had at times said a few grateful words to her, had alluded to the money as hers, had asked for her approval and advice.

Now he took entire possession of the estate, as though it had always been his own, managing everything after a lordly fashion and consulting only his own interest.

When the fever had somewhat abated, and Lady Laura was able to come downstairs, it was a dark and lowering face that met hers.

No one would have called him the "handsome Captain" who saw him then.

"I wish," said her ladyship to him one evening, when he had been particularly unamiable and disagreeable, "you would go up to town, Vance. It is useless for you to remain with me; your heart is not here."

"That is just the kind of opportunity a woman likes;" he said sneeringly. "If I were to leave you and seek what Heaven knows I want—a little change and recreation—you would consider yourself a martyr."

"I should not," she returned. "The time has arrived when the pain of your presence is far greater than the pain of your absence."

"I am glad to hear that, Laura," he said scoffingly. "It shows that you are coming to your senses, and there is a better chance for me. Nevertheless I shall not go up to town and leave you here."

"It will not be for love of me that you stay," she retorted bitterly.

"No, my dear; I have plans of my own, and it suits me to remain here," he said carelessly.

Lady Laura was thinking that, if he would go, she would send for Mr. Sansome, and then she could soon have Angela home again.

CHAPTER XLV.

BRANTOME HALL was neither ancient nor even altogether modern: it was simply a large, pleasant, old-fashioned, rambling house, with great well-lighted, lofty rooms.

A broad river wound its way close by, and in the distance was the long line of the sea.

By the banks of the Rinn at Brantome was Angela's favorite walk. She had been three weeks at the Hall, and day after day she had scanned the *Times*, but the longed-for advertisement had not appeared.

It had been agreed between Jane Felspar and Angela that they should not write to each other unless there was some great need.

Jane, not wishing to alarm the young girl did not inform her of Lady Laura's illness, which was tedious, but not dangerous; and Angela wondered much whether they had gone up to town, and, if so, why her mother had not sent for the lawyer.

It seemed to her so all-important that the will should be destroyed that she could not understand an hour's delay.

The three weeks had not been unpleasant ones.

There was the sense of freedom a terrible danger, from an intolerable fear, from the hideous daily contact with a man whose soul was steeped in wickedness, from the hourly pain of seeing her mother's sufferings.

Until she was at Brantome and in perfect safety, she did not fully realize how much she had suffered or how much she had feared.

In the long hours that passed she had time to think and reflect, to remember with a shudder how near she had been to death, to remember with horror how for months past the dark shadow of danger had followed her.

She was young and so innocent, so completely inexperienced in the ways of the world, so unversed in its inquiries and crime, that the horror of what she knew never left her.

When she slept, it was to dream that she was falling through the treacherous ice, or that she was in the boat on the lake, and the water rising fast around her.

At other times she saw the deadly poison dropped very slowly into the glass, and afterwards the Captain's terrified face turned towards her.

After a few days of rest, these dreams and fancies faded in some degree; but the change of scene did not entirely eradicate them.

Angela had been most kindly received by the housekeeper, Mrs. Bowen, as a friend of her cousin's who required rest and wished to be alone as much as possible.

Mrs. Bowen's practiced eyes detected the fact that Angela was a lady, and, although she marvelled just a little how such a one could be the friend of Jane Felspar, she was a sensible woman, and did not allow her curiosity to interfere with her desire to please her cousin Jane.

She saw there was some mystery, but, as it did not concern her in any way, she was well content to leave it alone.

Her mistress had given her permission to have a friend to stay with her when she wished, and she was but taking advantage of her offer.

The old housekeeper set apart for Angela's use a charming little room overlooking the greensward that led down to the river, a room in which the shadows of green boughs made rich tracery on the floor and walls, a room filled with flowers and the hangings of which were of pale sea-green and gold.

A few pictures in gilt frames, some books, a piano, a couple of easy-chairs, two large windows that opened on to the grass, helped to make the apartment, if not luxurious, at least most comfortable.

"This room, Miss Charles, is called the green room," the housekeeper explained. "Even when the family are at home it is seldom used; and I thought you would be more comfortable here than in the larger rooms. You can use it just as you will; and your sleeping-room is the one above it. My cousin informed me that you wished to be alone as much as possible."

"You are very good to me," said Angela gratefully.

Angela took possession of the green room and made herself as happy as possible. At her will she wandered over the great rooms of the house; but she took especial delight in the library, which contained many rare books.

But for the books, her life would have been a lonely one.

The servants never intruded upon her; Mrs. Bowen came at rare intervals, but never remained long.

Angela had therefore plenty of time in which to think of all that had happened, and conjecture what the future was likely to bring.

She had decided upon one thing, nothing should ever induce her, even if a new will were made, to live under the same roof with the Captain.

"Nor shall my mother either," she said to herself.

But as to how she should manage this she could form no idea.

"I am alone in the darkness," she said; "but light will come." She little dreamed how or in what way.

One morning Mrs. Bowen broke in upon her solitude.

"Miss Charles," said she, "I am going through the picture-gallery this morning. Would you like to see it? There are some very fine pictures in it; but most of the collection is modern. There are few works of the old masters."

"I should like very much to inspect it," replied Angela.

"Then come with me now, please."

"What a fine gallery!" exclaimed Angela, as she and Mrs. Bowen reached the long, lofty, well-lighted room.

"This was the late Lord Arleigh," said the housekeeper, drawing near to a large portrait; and Angela found herself looking at a kindly gentle face, not handsome, but with a touch of melancholy in its expression.

"I like that face," remarked Angela; "it is a good one."

"Yes, but melancholy," said Mrs. Bowen. "The shadow of an early death was always on the Earl's face. This is Lady Arleigh," added the housekeeper, pointing to the portrait of a lady. "My lady is not beautiful," observed Mrs. Bowen; "but she is very distinguished-looking."

"It is certainly a striking face," agreed Angela; and they passed on.

The housekeeper had, to examine the hangings of the windows, and, while she did so, she left Angela to wander at her will.

All the best modern artists were well represented—Millais and Ouless, Alma Tadema, Leighton, Prinsep, and others.

Presently her attention was attracted by a large painting hanging in an alcove, and she stood before it, looking at it in silence.

It was the portrait of a handsome young man; and why it impressed her so much was because the face resembled that of her own father.

The proud princely head was covered with clusters of golden hair, and the slight moustache, hiding a mouth that was beautiful as a woman's, was of a dark hue.

Angela stood looking at the picture with delight.

"Mrs. Bowen," she asked at last, "whose portrait is this?"

The housekeeper came up to her with a smile on her face, as though she were well pleased to answer the question.

"That is the present Earl; he is away with my lady in Italy."

"The present Earl!" echoed Angela.

She was about to remark that he resembled her father very much; but she refrained.

"What is his name?" she asked.

"Glenarvon Arleigh," was the reply; "but my lady and Lady Maud always call him Glen."

"I like the name," she said slowly. "And he is in Italy, Mrs. Bowen?"

"Yes, miss; they are all there; and I am afraid they will stay for some time longer yet."

Angela thought to herself that it was not all a misfortune, for, if the family had been at home, she could not have sought refuge at Brantome Hall.

After that morning she went often to the picture-gallery.

The great attraction of the place was the portrait in which she saw some slight resemblance of her father.

She liked to stand before it, to gaze at it and recall the beloved face.

The resemblance was great in the laughing blue eyes and the contour of the brow.

She never thought of the original; the picture had a fascination for her because it reminded her of her father; none the less the face of Glenarvon, Lord Arleigh, stole into Angela's heart, and made part of her dreams, though without any reference to the young lord himself.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE days passed on, and still no advertisement appeared. Day after day Angela scanned the columns of the *Times*, but there was nothing to tell her that her mother had destroyed the will.

She grew uneasy, although she knew that if any emergency arose, Jane Felspar would communicate with her; while, if all went on well, she had arranged not to write at all.

Angela tried to banish her disquieting thoughts with books and music, yet she had nevertheless always a strange sensation as of one waiting for some tragical occurrence.

There were days when she was too restless to read or to sing, when she wandered through the quiet alleys and by the river banks, thinking of the strange feeling which had so entirely taken possession of her.

There came a morning in June when everything was at its brightest; but the loveliness of the day had no charm for Angela.

She was chafing under the delay, and her thoughts were of her mother, of the Captain, and of the will, while she asked herself how much longer she would have to remain at Brantome.

She went to one of the bay-windows, which was half open, and, half reclining on one of the great Turkish rugs, forgot all else in the dream of story.

Angela's whole heart was engrossed with the novelist's grand conception. She found in books what she had found in real life—noble women like Romola, ignoble men like Tito.

"The Captain is like Tito," she said to herself, "but more wicked and more dangerous."

The character of Romola, so grand, so noble, grew upon her, and she read on, deep-

ly absorbed in the story, until a sound close by disturbed her.

She looked up with a deep sigh, as of one waking suddenly to real life, and then for a few moments she thought that the portrait she had admired had stepped out of its frame and stood confronting her.

Blue laughing eyes were looking into her own; a fair handsome face full of surprise was bent over her.

The book fell from her hands, and she started up in dismay.

"Pray do not let me alarm you," said a very pleasant voice with a rich musical ring. "I was unaware that there was any one here."

Angela knew that it was Glenarvon Arleigh, who stood before her, and she was at a loss what to do or say.

He hesitated, evidently waiting for her to give some account of herself.

The startled girl little dreamed what a charming picture she made standing there, with the sunlight falling on her white dress her face flushed into the color of a damask rose; she looked so shy and girlish, so young and lovely, that the picture never died from the young Earl's mind.

"I am Lord Arleigh," he said, with a low bow.

"I am," Angela began, but stopped abruptly.

Was she to tell this man who was looking at her with eyes so like her dead father's a lie? There seemed no help for it; the danger that hung over her was of such a terrible nature that she must conceal her identity at all hazards until the fatal will was destroyed.

"I am staying here with the housekeeper, Mrs. Bowen," she explained, after a moment's pause.

She saw the surprised look in his eyes, and she felt that he had recognized at once that she was not of that class from which Mrs. Bowen's visitors came; but she had the satisfaction of knowing that she had saved herself from having to remember that her first spoken words to Lord Arleigh had been false ones.

"I came," she added, "in search of a book."

"I hope you will use the library and the books as often as you like," he replied courteously. "I have just returned from Italy in consequence of a telegram from my agent, and I had no time to send any notice of my coming to Mrs. Bowen."

"And I ought not to be here," thought Angel.

Lord Arleigh seemed to understand her confusion and embarrassment, for he hastened to add—

"I know that Lady Arleigh, my mother, wishes Mrs. Bowen to give her friends every opportunity of enjoyment. I beg therefore that you will use the library and take from it what books you will."

At the same time the Earl was fully satisfied that the young lady was no friend of Mrs. Bowen's.

What a position! Why could not the young Earl have remained in Italy a few weeks longer? And yet there was another aspect of the matter that was altogether displeasing to her. If he had not returned just at this juncture, she would never have seen him, and she was pleased to have done so.

Angela went in the greatest dismay to Mrs. Bowen, whom she found wringing her hands in what seemed like utter despair.

"Oh, Miss Charles," she cried, "here is a shock! His lordship has come home, and there is nothing ready. I have neither fish nor game in the house. The rooms are all prepared, but there is nothing to eat."

"I came to speak to you about myself, Mrs. Bowen," she said. "I cannot remain here now that his lordship is at home."

The housekeeper looked at her in astonishment.

"Why not?" she asked briefly.

"It is impossible," replied Angela.

"I do not think so, Miss Charles. It will make no difference whatever to his lordship or to you. Your need never see him if you are careful, and he need never see you. It is not," she added presently, "as though you were a visitor to the family; you are my guest."

Angela then told her what had passed in the library.

"I am almost sorry that you saw the Earl before I had time to tell him," said Mrs. Bowen. "Not that it will matter in the least, for I am quite within my rights. My lady told me herself that, when the family were from home, I could have a friend to stay with me. The rooms that his lordship uses are all in the western wing. You are as far from him almost as though we lived in the village."

Still, despite these comforting assurances, Angela did not feel quite at ease. She could not forget that she held an utterly false position.

She therefore resolved that, while Lord Arleigh remained in the house, she would keep to her rooms, and not go into that part of the house where she would be likely to meet him.

She would go out early in the morning or late in the evening, when there was little chance of encountering him.

It was possible that even on the morrow the advertisement might appear, and then she could go away at once.

"Oh, mother," she cried impatiently, "if you knew all, you would not delay!"

The coming of the Earl made a great difference to Angela.

She felt both awkward and under restraint, and she hoped fervently that she should never see him again; yet at the same time she had a vague longing to look upon his face once more, because it was so like her father's.

She shrank back at the sound of his voice, yet she would have liked to speak to him again.

"I have traveled through many lands," said Lord Arleigh to himself; "but I have never seen a face and figure like hers. I must know more about her."

He rang for Mrs. Bowen, ostensibly to give some orders.

When these were done with, he remarked carelessly:

"I am glad to find that you have not been lonely, Mrs. Bowen. You have a young friend staying with you?"

"Yes, my lord," was the brief reply.

"What is her name?" was the next question.

"Miss Charles, my lord."

"A vague kind of name," he thought, "neither common nor uncommon, neither plebeian nor patrician."

"I hope," he continued, "that my sudden return will not in any way interfere with your guest, Mrs. Bowen."

"I do not see how it need, your lordship, as Miss Charles is my guest."

He longed to ask more questions about her, but was courteous enough to refrain.

He said to himself that he must accept the position as it was; yet he was sure there was some mystery.

Miss Charles was a lady; why was she on visiting terms with his mother's servants?

Lord Arleigh went to sleep that night with the fair face of Angela Rooden shining through his dreams.

CHAPTER XLVII.

ANOTHER day passed, and still no advertisement appeared.

By this time Angela had grown accustomed to the thought of Lord Arleigh's presence.

She had not seen him since the morning of his arrival; but she knew that he thought of her, for Mrs. Bowen frequently brought messages to her—Lord Arleight hoped that she would use the library as if he were not at home, that she would feel at liberty to visit the picture-gallery and the conservatories.

He hoped that Miss Charles was supplied with fruit and flowers.

The fact was that he longed to see her again, and he would have given anything for a chance interview; but he was courtesy itself.

He would not take any steps to bring about such a meeting; and Angela was most prudent so that there seemed little prospect of a meeting.

Even Mrs. Bowen herself, most stately and decorous of housekeepers, was perfectly content.

But there came a day when the weather was unusually warm and only a breath of air stirred the leaves of the trees.

The magnolias were all in flower, and the odor of the great white blossoms filled the air.

The only relief to the excessive heat was the slight salt breeze that found its way from the sea.

Angela had a longing to escape for a time from the heat, the perfume, and the vivid green down to the sands.

The beach at Culdale was charming, steep and rugged cliffs at the back, the summits of which were clothed with rich green grass and purple heather; the yellow sands in front stretched out far and wide.

There was a bend in the cliffs which formed a little bay, called Bramble Bay, one of the loveliest spots on the coast; and farther on were great wave-worn caves that were filled with water when the tide was in, and were dark and resounding when it was out.

The caves were known by the name of Bramble Hollows.

Altogether it was a spot to delight the artist-mind, with its blue shining waters, golden sands, and purple heather-crowned cliffs, and just the very spot for which Angela longed on this sultry day.

There was no danger of meeting the Earl, for he had gone out some time before, and Mrs. Bowen had told her that it was very uncertain whether he would return for luncheon or not.

"I shall be away for some hours, Mrs. Bowen," Angela said. "I am going down to the beach, and I will take my books with me."

So she walked through the park, with its long grass and stately old trees.

The heat seemed to increase until she was near the beach.

Then the briny odor of the sea reached her, cool and fresh.

She chose a shady spot under the shadow of an overhanging cliff; and, seating herself, her thoughts went away over the blue dancing waves.

There was almost a longing in her heart that the rest and peace could last for ever.

Presently her musings were disturbed by the sound of a man's voice singing the words of a love song.

Afterwards the odor of a cigar came to her with the sea-breeze; and then Lord Arleigh turned the corner of the great white cliff.

He gave a little exclamation of surprise when he saw her, and at once threw away his cigar.

He drew near to her with the greatest courtesy.

"You have sought refuge from the heat, Miss Charles," he said. "I do not remember such a warm beautiful June as this."

"June is always a lovely month," she responded; even the sound of the word has music in it. It is my favorite month."

He noticed that, although she had flushed and had seemed somewhat startled when she first saw him, she had quickly recovered herself.

Her manner now was perfectly natural and easy, and she did not seem to feel that there was any difference between them in rank or social status.

She was not confused, as one of "Mrs. Bowen's friends" would probably have been.

"Whoever she is," he thought, "she is accustomed to good society."

Angela's first impulse was to fly, and she half rose to do so. Lord Arleigh, however, prevented her.

"I am sorry that I disturbed you," he said, "and I beg most earnestly that you will not go away, Miss Charles. I shall be distressed if you do."

Angela longed to go, yet she had a desire to stay.

She determined not to leave, assuring herself that his lordship would not linger, and that a few minutes could not matter.

"How refreshing the sea-breeze is!" he went on. "It is strange that the same idea should have seized us both. I was going over to Blandthrope this morning; but the atmosphere seemed stifling, and I longed for a breath of sea-air. That is what brought me here."

"I came for the same reason," said Angela. "The deepest, greenest shade seems warm this morning; there is nothing cool but the sea."

"So June is your favorite month, Miss Charles? May is mine."

"May is the month of promises, June of realization," she replied. "At home ——"

Then she stopped abruptly, her face flushing crimson.

What had she been going to say? He perceived her embarrassment, but was far too well bred to notice it.

Then she reflected that she had better finish her sentence; he would not know where her home was.

So she continued:

"When I was home in the country, nothing pleased me so much as what I called the 'procession of flowers.' I waited and watched for them eagerly. I greeted each one as though it had been a living friend. April brought violets, primroses, and cowslips. Who shall tell the glories of May? The hawthorn on the hedges, the laburnums, the lilacs. June brings its wealth of lilies and roses. I have a great love for flowers."

"I think all true women love flowers. My sister is a rose-worshipper. That is why we have at the Hall so many different kinds of roses. Have you noticed them?"

"No," she replied, "not particularly.

"Have you been into the rose-garden?" he asked.

"I do not think so," she answered.

"You must see it," he continued. "It is believed to contain a greater variety of roses than is to be seen anywhere else."

He was about to add how pleased he should be to show the garden to her, but, on reflection, decided that it would be better not to do so, but to respect the reserve which she had chosen to adopt.

As for calling herself "Mr. Bowen's friend," however, it was sheer nonsense. He looked at her hands, and wondered that she did not perceive how they betrayed her.

The hands on which he looked were simply perfect in color and shape, the fingers slender and rounded, with almond-shaped nails, and there was a faint flush, like that of a delicate rose-leaf, in the palm.

"'A hand produced by centuries of cultivation,'" he quoted to himself.

Lord Arleigh talked to her of the book she was reading, of the flowers she loved, of any and everything he thought would interest her.

She grew interested, and after a time forgot all except the handsome face with the laughing frank blue eyes.

He was the first man who had ever interested her, and she found herself listening attentively to all he said, admiring his ideas and sentiments.

They made even in that short interview great strides into the wonder-world of poetry.

More than once Angela had risen to go; but he had begged eagerly—

"Do stay just a few minutes longer, Miss Charles. I may not have the pleasure of meeting you again;" and she had granted his request.

So the time passed, and, without knowing it, they learned the first lesson in love under the blue sky, with the shining sea stretched before them, with sea-gulls circling in the air, the waves kissing the sand, and the sweet summer wind singing as it has sung ever since the first love-story was told.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A NEW PLAY.—In a new play by Alexandre Dumas, called "Denise," one of the characters enunciates the following sentiments, which should be written in letters of gold: "Do you want to know what is absolute truth? It is to respect the first woman you have known and loved—your mother—in all the other women you may meet hereafter. It is not to make them fall if they stand high—not to drag them lower if they are debased already; it is to associate yourself for life with only one woman, your wife, and to have but one motive in marriage—love. This is truth. All that borrows the name and is not this has been invented to suit a society which is at once elegant and dissolute."

KEEP your conduct abreast of your conscience, and very soon your conscience will be illumined by the radiance of God.

Scientific and Useful.

DISINFECTANT.—A cheap and effective disinfectant can be made by dissolving a bushel of salt in a barrel of water, and with this water slack a barrel of lime. This forms a sort of chloride of lime, which may be used freely in cellars, out-houses, etc.

REFRIGERATORS.—It was by American ingenuity that the refrigerator method of shipping meat was made practicable, but it is now adopted by our competitors all over the world to our disadvantage. It has been proved that cattle and sheep can be slaughtered in tropical heat and delivered in London in the best condition after being carried 13,000 miles.

CALCULATING.—The calculating machine recently invented appears to excel, in its ingenious adaptation to a variety of results, even Babbage's wonderful apparatus. By means of the mere friction of a disk, a cylinder and a ball, the machine is capable of effecting numerous complicated calculations which occur in the highest application of mathematics to physical problems, and by its aid an unskilled person may, in a given time, perform the work of ten expert mathematicians. All this is done by simply turning a handle.

DRINKING SEA WATER.—Sea water has been converted into a beverage. A little citric acid or citrate of silver is added to the briny liquid, chloride of silver is precipitated, and a harmless mineral water is produced. An ounce of citrate renders a half-pint of water drinkable. Seven ounces would furnish a ship-wrecked man with water for a week. The question is how to secure the citrate to the shipwrecked man. It is recommended that those who go to sea carry with them a bottle of the citrate protected by an india-rubber covering, or that such bottles should be furnished in life-preservers. In the latter case, however, the people about to be ship-wrecked must not leave the life-preservers behind.

SWEEPING MACHINE.—The United States Consul at Manchester, England, in a report to the Secretary of State, describes a newly invented street sweeper which is about to be put in operation by the authorities of that city, and which he thinks will create a revolution in one of the chief departments of the sanitation of great cities. It not only sweeps, but gathers up the sweepings and removes them. With the new machine two men and two horses will, he says, be able to do the work which now devolves upon seven or eight men and two horses. The busiest thoroughfares of a great city may be cleaned at almost any time of day, as the whole machine is complete in itself; and interferes no more with traffic than the passing of any other large vehicle.

Farm and Garden.

SHELTER.—The economy of providing shelter cannot be too strongly urged. Boards are cheaper than grain. Cows forced to endure the winter storms require much more food to keep them in condition than if suitably housed. A cow cannot make much milk if she is subjected to extreme cold.

GIRDLING.—The best remedy against the girdling of trees by rabbits is to coat the bark with some substance offensive to them, one of the best being a thick wash made of cow manure and water, with enough water slacked lime to make the mixture of a dull white color or greenish gray. The mixture may be applied with an old broom or brush.

APPLE JUICE.—To keep apple juice through the winter in an uncured (unfermented) state, add one pound of whole mustard seed to the barrel. One ounce of salicylic acid, which is often recommended, will effectually stop all tendency to fermentation, but, being injurious, should never be used, while mustard seed is perfectly harmless.

MILKING.—How milking is done in the Island of Jersey is thus described—"Tall buckets, narrowed near the top, with widened mouths are used. A linen cloth is tied over the top, then a smooth sea-shell is pushed down into the depression to receive the milk. The shell prevents the wearing of the cloth by the streams of milk. When the milking is done the straining is also completed."

POULTRY.—One of the greatest obstacles in poultry raising is that of overfeeding. The hens should never be too fat, or they will not lay. They should be fed regularly but should be induced to take exercise by being compelled to search for their food, as the grains can be scattered among leaves or buried an inch under ground with a rake. At no time should the hens be so fed as to permit them to procure food from a trough whenever they desire it. They should be kept busy, and the result will be a larger number of eggs, and which will hatch better than those from overfat hens.

STOCK.—Many a man loses money on his stock for sale by failing to keep himself posted on market values. He should understand what is meant by the several grades, as recognized in the market reports. He must understand quality as not within these several grades. That is why one bunch, or an animal of a class, is worth more than another. In fat animals this depends partly on how much per cent. of meat will be given per 1000 of carcasses and also on the texture (quality) of the flesh. If he know little of these he should make a careful study thereof or else leave the selling to one who does know.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST
FOUNDED, A.D. 1821

PHILADELPHIA, DECEMBER 26, 1885.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.
(IN ADVANCE.)

1 Copy One Year	$2 00
2 Copies One Year	3 50
3 Copies One Year	5 00
4 Copies One Year	6 00
8 Copies One Year, and One to getter-up of Club	12 00
12 Copies One Year, and One to getter-up of Club	15 00
20 Copies One Year, and One to getter-up of Club	25 00

Additions to Clubs can be made at any time during the year at same rate.

It is not required that all the members of a Club be at the same postoffice.

Remit by Postal Order, Postal Note, Draft, Check, or Registered Letter.

Always enclose postage for correspondence requiring separate reply, to insure response.

Advertising rates furnished on application.

Address all letters to
THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Publication Office, 726 Sansom St.

The Day of the Year.

In the changes that are brought to all of us by Time, we find many scenes, and events, and seasons, that were once full of beauty and novelty, now grown old and tasteless. Our eyes no longer grow brighter as we see them coming, and our heart fails to hasten its beating in thinking of them, as was the case of yore. Newer feelings and influences, and newer surroundings, have taken their whilom places both in anticipations and active recollections, and that which erewhile for the nonce, might have been the very centre of our little circle of life, lies neglected and nearly forgotten in the graveyard of the past.

This we say, is true of many things, and it only shows that none of us are exempt from the common lot. To progress and change is the stern law that governs the material, and much of the mental, world. Even as the red rose-tree in winter, spreading in luxuriance and queenly pride beneath the protecting glass, forgets the bare and scant leaved desert-stock from which it sprang so long ago, so do the one-time precious buds that bloomed in our hearts give place to other flowers, and other dreams.

All, perhaps, save one. In the ruin of old customs, and tearing away of past remembrances, in the decay of former fancies, and former thoughts and themes, there is a single spot—a single treasure—ever sacred and exempt from change. It is a relic of Eden before which the Angels of Love and Memory stand with flaming swords, and let no unworthy, no desecrating, entrance—the holy thought of Christmas Day.

As a mother who has lost her little child and can only think of it, even after the lapse of long, long years, as still a baby in the Heaven where she hopes to meet it, so is this day and season to those whom its spirit has truly blest. They see it in retrospection; they see it in the present, or in prospect, always one and the same, unchanged and unchangeable. To them it is the moment during which, in the slow or speedy passage of the months, the key of a diviner love unlocks the treasures of their hearts. When, for a time, we catch a glimpse of what we might be always, were love here more, and selfishness less. When, if at any time upon this earth it comes to us, we have a foretaste of the bliss that prevails there where the Christmas spirit rules throughout the eternal year.

But, as the season mostly belongs to the older in memory, and in effort for others, so does its outflow and expectation tend directly to the youthful. The glad thought that it is come, or coming, awakes a thrill of joy in many a heart. The children clap their tiny hands and laugh aloud in the exuberance of their mirth as its bright visions flit before their minds. The sound of merry sports, the gathering of the social band, the banquet—all scenes of joy.

Shout on, bright children, for your innocent mirth will rise as incense to Him who was once a little child. "Christmas! Christmas!" is the cry of the young and gay, and with light hearts they prepare for the festival. The holiday robes are chosen, and the presents selected, which shall bring joy to so many hearts. Swiftly speed their welcome tasks, and a calm delight fills their hearts as they remember Him who assumed mortality and passed the ordeal of earthly life that He might be, in all things, like unto mankind, that He might do good to others.

Blessed be this thought, and if after years shall bring sorrow and bitterness, all may remember that the Holiest trod that path before, and that deeper sorrow than mortal ever suffered once rested on His guileless head.

Christmas may wake in the hearts of the aged memories of other years when the pulses of life beat full and free, and their keen sensibilities were awake to the perception of the beautiful. Now the dim eye may no longer enjoy the full realization of beauty. The ear may be deaf to the melodies of nature, but they can drink from the fountain of memory, and, while looking upon the mirth of the youthful, recollect that once they, too, were light-hearted and joyous. Blessings to them in the Christmas festival, and blessings unto all!

Every community which is dependent upon itself for amusement should have an organization for promoting sociability. Interest the young people first, by inviting them to spend an evening at your house. If you can privately, beforehand, notify several of your young friends to prepare to read, sing, or play for you. If you can send for a friend at a distance who has some special talent, all the better. If you can afford to offer a few simple refreshments, do so; if not, never mind; finish the evening by a few old-fashioned romps. Then, when you are sure they have had a good time, say you would like to form a society among yourselves, to meet at stated times—object, mutual entertainment and improvement. If they are in favor, capture the brightest, most energetic spirits for your right-hand men and women. With their help you cannot fail, for young people are enthusiastic workers. Encourage your friends to prepare songs and recitations, or to volunteer to read or play, and ask them to bring friends and spread the interest. After awhile, when the association has taken form, speak of contributions to a library fund. Meanwhile, use for common readings to form the subject of conversation, essays, debates, etc., the best books that you have or can borrow. Many interesting exercises can be invented by yourselves. Thus, by multiplying your amusements and subjects of interest, the society will slowly and surely grow until it becomes a large and powerful organization. But the simplest reading circle is better than nothing.

It is half-following the line of duty that is so difficult. A great danger will stimulate to greater courage than a slight one. You can get up spirit enough to carry you through a grand, heroic deed more easily than through a commonplace one. Some people might be good Christians if they set out to be better than they are. They fail because they only hover about the virtues, instead of plunging right in. They would make good martyrs; but they are poor confessors. They would be faithful even unto death in a persecution; but they are not proof against sneers and grins. They can bear a heavy cross manfully; but when it is only a little one they want to fling it down. Troubles to them are like the deafening roar of traffic in a city office, which goes on unceasingly, and yet never disturbs the clerk at his desk; while, if a boy began to whistle softly at his side, he would be distracted at once. The greater is easier to bear than the less, because they make preparations in one case, and not in the other. The whole is not so troublesome as the part. It is not easy to stop half way. They say it is perfectly safe to carry a gun at half-cock, which is perfectly true only when you have a perfect gun. Half-measures are dangerous measures. To half-promise is not to promise. To half-finish is not to finish. Sins must be slain, not wounded; and they are not dead if they have only one foot in the grave. Graces must bloom as well as bud; and virtues, like fruit, must be ripe, or they are not worth keeping.

Loss of fortune, loss of health, of friends—there are many who make these occasions for everlasting blight, and some, thank heaven, who do not. But the blighted being knows nothing of the wholesome strength, the blessed grace which makes a life superior to its circumstances. If he loses his fortune he finds no pleasure in his health, and cares nothing for his friends. All that he can do is to parade the fact of his present poverty as against his past prosperity, with such eternal and pathetic consciousness of his blighted existence as moves tender hearts to infinite compassion. But the hard-headed and unimaginative think—why not try to do that which shall repair this damage instead of merely regretting it in idleness? Why not work, and by work earn at least something? Something is at all times better than nothing, and if it is only a little—what are the muckles but a collection of littles? The part of a blighted being without money in its purse is never a very lucrative one; and it would be really wise to barter some of the sympathy for which it craves for a little more of the filthy lucre which it regrets. Ruined health, too, like lost property, can be mitigated, if not wholly restored; for cheerfulness and courage, patience and sweetness, do more in sickness than the blighted being who moans can be brought to believe. And even for the loss of the dearest—is not resignation to a higher will and patient recognition of the unalterable a nobler kind of thing than mildew and tears?

At the merry Christmas time there is a voice forever stilled whose recorded words yet live to show he loved the season well—Charles Dickens, the great story-writer. It was he who said: "Christmas is a time in which the memory of every remediable sorrow, wrong and trouble in the world around us should be active within us. I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year. Christmas is the only holiday of the year that brings the whole human family into common communion. It is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty founder was a child Himself. I have always thought of Christmas time as a good time—a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time. The only time in the long calendar of the year when men and women seem, by one consent, to open their shut-up hearts freely."

Don't wait even for the new year to start the changes in your character that need changing—there could not be a better time for it than Christmas. Remember in all things that, if you do not begin, you will never come to an end. The first weed pulled up in the garden, the first seed in the ground, the first dollar put in the savings bank, and the first mile traveled on a journey, are all important things; they make a beginning, and thereby a hope, a promise, a pledge, an assurance that you are in earnest in what you have undertaken. How many a poor, idle, hesitating outcast is now creeping and crawling on his way through the world who might have held up his head and prospered if, instead of putting off his resolutions of industry and amendment, he had only made a beginning.

Politeness is to a man what beauty is to a woman. It creates almost an instantaneous impression in his behalf, while the opposite quality exercises as quick a prejudice against him. Polished manners have made hundreds successful, while the best of men by their hardness and coolness have done themselves an incalculable injury, the shell being so rough that the world could not believe that there was a precious kernel within it. Had Raleigh never flung down his cloak in the mud for the proud Elizabeth to walk on, his career through life would scarcely have been worth recording. Droves of men have been successful in life by pleasing manners alone. It is a trait of character well worth cultivating. Never forget the value of true civility.

Just as all healthy plants rise to seek the light of the sun, so the truly upright man seeks the light of intelligence to guide him on his way. He does not rest in ignorance, in prejudice. He keeps his mind open to reason and his faculties alive to discover new thought, and to test its truth. He who refuses to improve his opportunities, to sift his opinions, and to learn from every source, neither deserves a good name nor will be able to secure it.

The World's Happenings.

California has a rat that climbs trees like a squirrel.

The debts of the King of Bavaria amount to $7,500,000.

There is not a Democratic newspaper in Rhode Island.

The Yuma Indians dispose of their dead by cremation.

A new hotel at St. Augustine, Fla., is to cost $2,000,000.

A Chinese divorce case is before the court at Phœnix, A. T.

A nightingale that sings a charming song is a $65 toy in Paris.

Thomas James, of Gainesville, Fla., is the father of 53 children.

Long stockings are in favor with children as Christmas approaches.

Hold-the Fort is the name of a postoffice in Kingman county, Kans.

The Government is selling the last of the flint left over from the war.

Mr. Cleveland at church always puts a $1 greenback in the contribution box.

There are 3,642 languages spoken and 1,000 different religions on the globe.

Wm. H. Vanderbilt told a Cleveland, O., man that his income in 1863 was $20,000,000.

The Sultan of Turkey has 250 wives, and his personal expenses are $12,000,000 a year.

Four beautiful American girls are said to be among the Italian Queen's maids of honor.

"Father's Teeth are Stopped with Zinc," is the title of a popular song now sung in London.

An eloping couple were married on horseback, in Louisville, Ky. They were both on the same horse.

Red lamps in Scotch cities indicate at night that drop-letter boxes are attached to the posts.

Of the 300,000,000 eggs annually used in Paris, every one is inspected by being held before a candle.

Hop-scotch, a British investigator says, is identical with a game described by Pliny as played by boys in his day.

Two tons of gold, worth $1,400,000, are lost every year from the wear and tear of commerce or personal use.

When she is home, Judic, the French actress, bathes in a silver bath-tub, which has her monogram in gold.

Twenty years ago the English House of Commons contained only two teetotalers. At present it has thirty-six.

A man and wife in Belmont, Maine, attempted suicide the other day, but only one—the husband—was successful.

Troy, N. Y., has a quarter of a million dollars in face value of suits pending against it for falls on icy sidewalks.

To clear rats out of a house, according to an esteemed contemporary, play a base drum in the cellar for several days.

"Ten birds' heads, fifteen wings, and a few tail feathers" are the proper trimmings for a New York hat now-a-days.

In Spain the natives keep guinea hens about their houses for the sake of enjoying their harsh and discordant cries.

George Bancroft, the historian, is the only private citizen who has been given the right to the floors of Congress at all times.

In Boston the law against smoking in the streets still exists, and any smoker could be arrested by any policeman who chose to do so.

In England a man was recently arrested under a nearly forgotten law forbidding driving through the streets during church time.

Secretary Whitney keeps up four houses—one in New York, one in Lenox, one near Georgetown Heights, and one in Washington.

A man in Nicholas county, W. Va., has seven wild bears in a pen, and is fattening them for market. One of them already weighs seven hundred pounds.

The combined capital of the firm of the Rothschilds is now placed by persons who pretend to know at the sum of $1,000,000,000, half of it gained within the last 25 years.

Plum pudding was not known till toward the latter part of the seventeenth century, though something very much like it had been a favorite dish for a lengthened period.

A sensation has been caused in Logansport, Ind., by the elopement of a resident who has thrice been married, with his second wife, from whom he has twice been divorced.

So strict are the election laws in England that to give a tin rattle to a voter's baby, with winning the man's favor in view, is to risk fine, imprisonment and disqualification for public office.

"Cool as a cucumber" is scientifically correct. An investigation in England showed this vegetable to have a temperature of one degree below that of the surrounding atmosphere.

There appears to be an agreement among recent medical writers that water is fattening, or at least favors a fulness or roundness of the body. It should be drunk at its natural temperature and in considerable quantity.

The taxidermist of the National Museum, who is of an inventive turn of mind, is constructing a unique footstool. It is to be made of an elephant's foot, the nails of the foot brightly polished, and the top upholstered in plush.

People in England who grow flowers for a living, complain of the ruinous competition that has sprung up in the last few years, their rivals being none other than the nobility and gentry, who ship their flowers and fruit to market.

HEART AND HAND.

BY WILLIAM MACKINTOSH.

'Twas not for self the Righteous One appeared;
To bless mankind He left his golden throne,
The hungry fed, their drooping spirits cheered
And gladly made their sorrows all His own.

Thus ye whose stores are brimful—thank of those
In lowly homes in want and scant of fare;
Stop not to ask the cause of all their woes,
Nor have sad hearts to lay their secrets bare.

Speak not unkind, nor careless, turn away,
Help, give and soothe, as God has blessed your store;
As selfish joys soon hasten to decay,
Of pleasure grant full meed—but pity more.

Who may expect to bring Love's blessing down
On groaning tables by its bounty spread,
If Want's sad wail is met with angry frown,
And the Christmas heart to the Christmas hand's unwed?

Not Lived in Vain.

BY P. K. M.

THEY were foolish of course.

But if all people were wise the Millennium would be at hand.

And neither the lions in the forest, nor the men and women in the cities, are ready for that time of universal peace and love united with common sense and the right reason.

Wherefore, when Basil and Clarice allowed themselves to drift apart, no one knew why, and they themselves no more than others, they were proving their own unfitness for any state of existence more rational and less imperfect than this, and showing themselves as beings of infinite wroughtheadedness and undeniable absurdity.

Why should they not speak and have it out?

A few plain words would have set things to rights.

Why did he sulk and pay attention to Bessie Tanner, because she had tossed her head and flirted with Bessie's brother, Jack?

In the depths of his fiery heart Basil knew that he loved Clarice and did not care the traditional two straws for Bessie.

And in the depths of her aching soul Clarice knew that she oved Basil and did not hold brother Jack higher than a performing monkey, cleverly taught to go through his exercises.

Yet both those ridiculous young people made believe to slight what they prized and to value what they disregarded, for the mere pleasure of torturing themselves and vexing each other.

And all for what?

For the merest trifle—for something lighter than air, and even more inane than the ordinary causes of quarrel common to lovers—inane as these are.

It was like the storm which kept King Jamie's bride in Norway for so many weary days and weeks.

Originally raised at home by miserable witches when they muttered their incantations over their washtubs, and the bowl therein "whummelled" while the water seethed and bubbled—as the sign of tossing ship and howling wind and raging waves beyond the shore—this storm nearly cost the lives of brave men and fair women, and laid a nation through its king in mourning.

So these lover's quarrels, begun for nothing, may end in broken hearts and ruined lives, and the golden bowl of happiness "whummelled" to dire purpose indeed!

It all began because Basil was late for his appointment on the lake, near Friar's Crag, where he had engaged to meet Clarice and his sister for the afternoon's skating.

He had been kept by his father, the squire who wanted to copy an important document connected with the estate; but, as Clarice was not at his back, she knew nothing of the cause, and, being cross because she was disappointed—also perhaps because she was cold—she tossed up her pretty head and flourished off with Jack Tanner, whose attentions she appeared to accept with as much complaisance as if they had been paid by Basil himself.

Then, Basil, who had felt himself both virtuous and ill-used in having devoted to his father the time he had hoped to spend with Clarice, revenged himself by flirting again with Bessie, as has been said; poor Bessie, who cherished secret wishes, that way being thereby lifted into the Elysium of the self-deceived, wherein she envied neither king nor kaiser.

Thus, the unspoken passion between the two whom fate and fortune had destined for each other—that unspoken passion which had been almost at the boiling point ready to bubble over into words—suddenly sank and sank till it fell below zero and silence—when you might as well have expected an icicle to break into steam as this ridiculous coolness and misunderstanding to dissolve itself by words.

The winter was early this year, and the Month of the Goat went back on old traditions and bleak circumstances.

There was no chance of the Green Yule which they say makes a green churchyard.

But, on the contrary the frost was of the true black iron character, wherein all nature was bound as in a chain, no living thing could break.

The young and healthy rejoiced, while the aged, the poor, the sickly, the unprotected were like so many sensitive plants struck with the whip of winter and slain by his breath.

Out on the lake and the tarns and the swamps was skating-ground galore for the youths and maidens in fine condition and warm furs.

But inside the cottages of the poor were biting cold and insufficiency, or warmth to be had only at the expense of fresh air, and accompanied by the mephitic vapors we all know so well.

It was an unpleasant change for these youths and maidens to go from the tingling exhilaration of this rapid exercise and the fresh pure air into the stifling cottages where never a breath of ozone passed, and where the odors rivalled those of Cologne—minus Farina and his compeers.

But duty has to be done as well as pleasure taken; and, for the squire's son and the clergyman's daughter, their poorer neighbors in need were not like dumb cattle to be left unvisited.

Especially where there was sickness was the greater need of kindness.

And when this sickness was chronic, and the patient had been made a kind of pet for some months, it was doubly incumbent on all who had looked after him in summer to take care of him now in winter, when his wants were multiplied and his sufferings increased.

Down Langford Lane lived a poor cripple boy, one Joshua Day.

He was his widowed mother's only child, and for the matter of that her only earthly treasure.

She was a loving gentle kind of woman who, married to a drunken brute, had undergone her bitter martyrdom for about seven years, during which time her husband had ill-treated and half starved her, and had ended by crippling his little son for life.

Then he died, and the two who had been his victims came to their peace.

The gentry round about were very kind to them, and gave Jane as much work as she could do; while Josh went to school and proved himself a born student and a good scholar.

He was so quick and intelligent that all things seemed possible to him; and the dream of his life—and the hope mingled with fear of Jane's—was that he should one day be a schoolmaster, like Mr. Berridge who now taught him, and open out to others, the gardens of intellectual delight in which he himself had found his everlasting happiness.

Should this ever be so, then would his physical misfortune prove to have been God's blessing in disguise.

With health and serviceable sinews, a straight back and a strong arm, he would have had to set to manual labor of a coarse kind.

He would have been a bricklayer like his father; and he would have never known the joy of learning.

Now, with his poor crippled body and his delicate hands that could hold nothing heavier than a book, nor do aught needing more exertion than cross-stitch and netting, he had both the right and the time to cultivate his intellect.

And there seemed to be no reason why he should not make this his capital in the years to come, and pay back the good that had been done him by others, by showing that he was worthy of it.

The large bright eyes looked larger and brighter and burnt with increase of fire as he talked of all this with his mother.

The wan face, with that dangerously vivid spot on each sunken cheek, flushed as the glory of the future seemed like a real and present thing to the fervent imagination of the crippled dreamer.

And Jane herself, for all her fears, lying like little snakes in her heart, oft let herself be warmed by her son's bright fire, and gave herself up to Hope without too much restraint or dread.

But the sudden cold of the premature winter touched poor Josh, as it touched many others.

A strange weakness fell on him and a fierce fever possessed him.

Night and day he burnt as if a fire was in his veins, save when the morning damps, cold and clammy made him feel like someone whose life's blood is being slowly drained away.

A cough broke out which defied all the doctor's stuff to subdue; and though he *himself*, poor lad, said that he was bound to get well when the spring came—if indeed he did not take the turn when the frost should break and the thaw set in—others, more clear-sighted, knew that the Great Firman had been signed, and that of all the angels who stood about him Azrael stood the nearest.

It was a heartbreak to Jane, who would not shut her eyes, yet would not confess; but what could be done?

The charter on which we hold our life is written over with lines of sorrow, and ends in that one word Death—the same for us all; and whether we will or no, we have to face the inevitable and bear that cross which no man born of woman can lay down, save when he lays it down in his own grave.

A heartbreak to Jane, Josh Day's condition was a veritable sorrow to the gentry who had befriended him; to the master who had put more than ordinary professional zeal in teaching him; and above all the two young fools who were now trifling with their life's happiness for a mere nothing, and tossing away the golden ball of true love as if it were a pebble flung into the sea.

The squire's son on whose property stood Jane's cottage—the clergyman's daughter, into whose round of duties came that of kindly visiting the sick and the poor—Basil and Clarice had often met in Longford's Lane, where indeed a great part of their silent courtship had been done.

Nothing opens the heart to love so much as pity, whether it be pity for yourself or pity for another.

All the tender feelings have for their culmination Love; and compassion, in any form, is a stepping stone like the rest.

When these two young people had met, or in the lane or the cottage itself, they had met in a state of mind more ready than ordinary, to receive all tender, soft impressions.

Since, however, this dumb and stupid quarrel had been like a dead stone wall between them, they had never found themselves together at the widow's cottage.

This had been Clarice's doing.

Basil, wanting in the finer finesse of a woman, had gone as usual, on the same day and at the same hours as before—but Clarice had broken the order, and thus had successfully evaded her, as she thought him, recreant lover.

For things were now very bad indeed between them.

Beginning in nothing, they had gone on to a grave and serious severance; and by this time both were superficially persuaded that there never had been any love between them, and never could be—that of all men on the face of the earth Basil was the last she, Clarice, would have chosen—of all the girls under the sun Clarice was the least suited to him, Basil.

Then, full of this false belief and unspoken anger, they suddenly stood face to face in Jane Day's cottage—where the poor young fellow lay in his bed, Death, crowned with flowers, standing near him as his Benefactor and Releaser.

It was Christmas Eve, and the stern black weather still continued.

Out of doors the new-fallen snow lay thick and soft over the frozen earth; and the sunshine struck a thousand flashing jewels from every crystal gemming the dead leaves and starring the bougies and branches of the trees.

The roads were as hard as iron; and even the new-fallen snow was already trodden into ice, on which the footsteps rang with a sharp metallic sound that echoed far and wide in the still air.

All nature seemed asleep or dead—wrapped in this winding-sheet of snow.

Only man survived, the living lord of even this frozen death which had destroyed all tender things.

From the keen brisk exhilarating air came tramping into the small, low heated, cottage, young Basil Strahan, the squire's eldest son.

He brought his youth and cheery presence, his stalwart beauty and his manly strength, and a couple of shining coins forbye, as his contribution to the sick lad's Christmas cheer.

The Hall had sent other things already; but nothing that poor Josh prized so much as the touch of this vigorous hand, the sound of this kind strong voice.

After he had been there a few moments, the quick, short, tinkling trend of a woman was heard pacing down the lane; and Basil's fair face flushed from brow to chin as the footstep stopped at Jane's cottage door, and the next minute Clarice appeared.

She carried in her hand a small bunch of green-house flowers, for the boy was passionately fond of flowers, which he always said spoke to him as if they had been living things.

Clarice did not flush when she saw Basil Strahan.

On the contrary, she turned paler than the white flowers in her hand, as she gave a cold, constrained kind of bow and then ignored the young man's presence as if he had never been.

The dying lad looked sadly from each to each.

He had seen the little love story as it had begun and grown about his sick bed, and he had missed the pleasant poem of late and regretted that he could no more take his own joy in the love of these others.

But when he saw this cold estrangement in the place of the former shy but evident warmth and life, his regret became pain—a pain far sharper than either could have suspected possible in a mere onlooker.

For the actors never realise the intensity of sympathy in the spectators, and least of all when they are in love.

There was a dead silence among them, broken only by the quick, resounding, hard-drawn breath which told him how near to the end of all things in time and space was the village favorite and the widow's only hope.

But the keen bright eyes went from face to face, reading, searching, inquiring, understanding, as only the dying can.

Thus, feebly he reached out his wasted hands—one to each; and each took what he offered.

"I am going to my Father in heaven," he said softly, slowly, often interrupted by that checked, laborious breathing. "I shall soon be there. Before I go let me speak. There is bad blood here between you two. Squeeze it out of your hearts. You were not meant for it. You were meant to love each other. Don't be vexed with me. When we are as close to death as I am we see things. And we are not afraid. God bless you. Shake hands before I die. Love each other again. Ah! that is right! that is right!" he whispered with a radiant and yet solemn smile, as Clarice, weeping passionately, turned her face to Basil's shoulder, while he, his eyes wet too, held her close, close to his heart, and kissed her ungloved hand with tenderness as infinite as his new-found love.

"Mother," then said Josh rising in his bed with one supreme effort: "dear mother you love too. We shall meet again soon, and never part more."

"God's will be done. Thank God for all His mercies!"

He sank back on the pillow and his glazed eyes turned.

And just as the pale winter sun set behind the hills, his blameless life too went out; and the spirits of the just made perfect received one more into their number. And as that winter sun left behind it trails of glory in the sky, and potentialities of life beneath the frozen snow, so from the death-bed of poor Joshua Day sprang up the flowers of love and happiness, and better knowledge and reconciliation; and no life can be said to have been lived in vain which redeems the lives of others.

The Lost Diamond.

BY M. THORNE.

AT a Christmas gathering in the mansion of an English nobleman, the guests took the freak to have the servants tell stories of their lives, and one named Molly, a comely, sonsy looking woman of about forty years of age, told her story forthwith, without much hesitation, and not much bungling or breaking down.

It's all about myself, she said, and not much in it, either, but my lord likes to hear of it sometimes.

It was all twenty years ago, and I was his servant then as I am now.

He wasn't Lord Grasslands then, but Colonel Charlton, and he lived at Canterbury, in a house in the big barracks up there.

It wasn't long after he was married, and he and my lady that was afterwards were very fond of music.

It seemed to me that it was almost a craze the colonel had—saving your presence my lord. I didn't mean any offence.

Lord Grassland laughed, and nodded across the circle to Molly.

"There's none taken," he said. "You are telling a story remember, not talking to your master. Go on; say what you will, and don't let my being here spoil your tale. I had a craze for music," he added, looking round; "have still, as everybody knows; but it was very nearly making me commit a gross injustice in this instance. Go on, Molly."

It was a craze, almost, she went on. To have a perfect band was his sole ambition and he spent a mint of money in getting things just as he wanted them.

The bandmaster being in some sort a gentleman, and well paid, I suppose couldn't say much—or, at least he didn't; but the sergeant and the men, down to the fifes and drums, and the little trumpeter, hadn't an easy time of it.

The band sergeant was courting me at the time, and that's how I came to know; but I didn't favor him.

He wasn't a good man.

I thought so then, but I found it out afterwards.

"So did I," said Lord Grasslands, "the scoundrel! He didn't know his business a bit, and cost me more than three efficient men would have done. All right, Molly. I'm very rude to interrupt you so."

"It helps me on my lord," Molly returned smiling; "gives me breathing time like." No I didn't care for Sergeant Marwick, because I liked Tom Bruce a deal better.

Tom was clever—a deal cleverer than the sergeant—but he was not as steady as he might have been, and he got passed over because of it.

He could play almost anything, could Tom, but when what I am going to tell you about happened, he was big drum.

That drum was nearly the death of poor Tom.

He was little and it was big, and, when he got into the straps, the top of it was just on a level with his nose, and he couldn't see over it.

It was always making him ridiculous, but he played it well.

People are apt to think that playing a drum's easy.

Just let anyone that has never learned take the drumsticks and try a roll; they'll soon find out that it takes both strength and skill.

The colonel knew how to play.

It's my belief he knew how to do everything, for there wasn't the least thing that he couldn't show the men how to set right; and he was always finding fault with poor Tom.

Not with his playing, for there wasn't a man in the land that could handle a drumstick like Tom Bruce, but with his style, as if a man with a mountain hung round his neck could have any style.

"I beg your pardon Molly," said his lordship laughing. "A great deal of style may show in the handling of a drumstick."

"Yes, my lord, when a man's bigger than his drum, and has shapely arms. Tom hadn't."

"No, that he hadn't, nor a notion how to use them. I did my best, but it was no use."

I was watching one day, Molly went on, speaking as if his lordship were not present, and I remember noticing how his diamond ring—that very one he has on now—flashed and sparkled in the sunshine as he waved, and pointed, and talked to the men.

Something was wrong with Tom and the drum.

I never knew what, but Tom told me afterwards the parchment was faulty, and that the colonel had stood over them while it was set right, and had been very cross all the time.

He came in to dinner, looking anything but amiable, and went up to his dressing room without a word.

I was rung for while they were at table, and my mistress said to me—

"Molly, go upstairs and fetch the colonel's ring. It is on my ring stand."

I went up, wondering he should have

forg tten it, for he was always very particular about that ring.

He was never without it.

I looked on the ring stand, but it wasn't there; and then on the dressing table, the washstand, the mantle-piece—everywhere I could think of, but no ring was to be seen at all.

His own dressing room was being painted, so I knew he had not been in there; and, after hunting as thoroughly as I could, I went down again.

"You have been a long time," he said, shortly.

"I was looking for the ring, sir," I said.

"Looking for it?"

"Yes, sir."

"But I told you where it was."

"It's not there, sir." I said, feeling terribly frightened; for he seemed to be put out.

"Not there! Nonsense!"

"It isn't, indeed, sir. I've looked everywhere."

"I tell you I put it there myself when I went upstairs. No one has entered the room since. It is absurd for you to say that you cannot find it. It could not fly away without hands."

I went up again and searched once more, and presently my master and mistress followed me up.

He had taken the ring off, he said, before beginning to dress, and had hung it upon the topmost branch of a fanciful little ring-stand that stood in the toilet tray—he touched the exact place where he had put it—and it certainly could not have got away from there without being lifted.

"The ring must have been stolen," he said, presently, in his very sternest voice, and I trembled all over, for it seemed to me he suspected me of being the thief.

Well, to make a long story short, and to get over the disagreeable part of it as soon as possible, the police were sent for, and after examining everybody in the house, and making a lot of talk, they came to the conclusion that I was the thief.

I was continually about my mistress's room; no one else had the opportunity that I had, and they mistook my incoherence and agitation for guilt.

They brought up such a lot of circumstantial evidence to show that no one else could possibly have taken it that even my mistress—good kind soul that she was—began to have her doubts.

But they could not prove it.

I let them search me and my boxes as they liked—though if I had taken the ring it wouldn't have been where they could have found it—and when it was all done, and they could come to nothing but suspicion, I took a month's wages and went away.

I couldn't stay in a place where I was looked upon as a thief, and yet I couldn't make up my mind to go out of reach of Tom Bruce.

Tom tried to cheer me up all he could when he bade me good bye.

"I know you didn't do it, Molly, dear," he said, "whoever did it, so keep up your heart. I'll get leave to marry you directly, and then they may talk as they like. You'll have me to stand by you."

Poor, dear, careless Tom!

He was about the last man in the regiment that would have got leave to marry.

He was half his time in the guardroom for something or other, and I was the last woman that the colonel would have taken into the regiment just then.

"Isn't that true my lord?"

"Indeed it is, Molly. I was very angry, and very blind, and unjust. Go on don't spare me."

"But your lordship made up for it afterwards," Molly said, smiling all over her face. "Ain't I here under the golden holly this very minute, and going off with my dear young lady to-morrow, and all along of that ring? I knew what Tom talked about, poor fellow, was nonsense, but it was a comfort to hear him say it, for all that."

"You won't go where I can't see you?" says Tom.

"No!" I replied. "I've no money to spend on journeys, and I've no relations or friends to care where I live, and I shall stay here. I shall get something to do, I daresay."

So I went and lodged with one of the men's wives that lived outside, and I soon began to pick up a living.

I was handy at most things, and she was glad to give me a lot of the ironing and many other bits of work that she had not time to finish herself.

So altogether I didn't do so badly, and as I kept to myself, and was very quiet, I wasn't to say unhappy, except at times when I could not help thinking about the colonel's ring, and the dark suspicion that had been cast on me about it.

My dear mistress was very kind to me. I don't think she ever believed I was a thief, and though she couldn't countenance me, or send me work because of the colonel, she managed to do many little things to help me, and never met me without a kind word.

Well, things went on like this for about three months, and any chance of my marrying Tom was as far off as ever.

Poor fellow, he was one of those who always seemed unlucky.

Whatever he did seemed to end in scrapes, but he was a cheery good-hearted fellow, and true as steel to me.

I kept away from the barracks, for I felt that I didn't like to face anyone there, though Mrs. Harris—that was the woman I lived with—told me that nobody really believed I was guilty.

But one day she came in with some work in her arms, and asked me to go with her inside.

There were to be grand doings the next day.

Some great man or other was to come down to inspect the men, and there was to be a march past, and a parade, and, in fact, it would be a sort of holiday.

I said 'No' at first, but I hesitated, for I hadn't seen Tom for a long time.

He had been a defaulter for ever so long, poor Tom, and couldn't get out.

I knew I should see him, anyway, or as much of him as the drum didn't hide, and after a bit I consented to go.

"They'll all be glad to see you, Molly," Mrs. Harris said. "Every one of them. They often talk about you."

By 'they,' she meant the married women at the quarters.

I had been friendly with nearly all of them when I lived in the barracks, and I dressed myself, and went with her.

Sure enough, they were all very kind, and I seemed to forget my trouble being among them once more and in sight of Tom, for I was up at a sergeant's window in front looking down on all that was going on.

The band was just under us, and Tom could see me when he looked up, and what a glad brightness came into his face when he did see me, to be sure.

The music was all big drum to me, and the parade was all Tom, but I felt very happy at being there, and something more hopeful than ever I had been before that everything would come right.

I looked at the colonel, and I couldn't help being proud that I had ever been in his service, in spite of his harshness to me—he looked such a gallant, noble gentleman; and I looked at my dear mistress, too for I saw her at the window when I crossed the barrack square.

She nodded to me quite kindly, and I felt as if the bright day had grown suddenly brighter, and as if the very sunbeams and blue sky brought hope and comfort with them.

I don't know much about the parade. I was looking at Tom, and thinking surely no one could find fault with the way he handled his drumsticks now.

I remember nothing but one tune, 'Rule Britannia'—it had been asked for, I believed—and what came of it.

It all happened in a minute.

I suppose Tom was inspired by my presence, or it may have been that something was wrong with the drum; but suddenly at one vigorous thump there was a crack, and in went the drumstick.

That wasn't all.

Tom's hand went with it and then his arm—the tightened parchment dragged it in; and there he was perfectly powerless, with his right arm imprisoned in the drum all on one side, and nearly black in the face with his efforts to get the drum off with his left.

It is no part of a soldier's duty to laugh, especially on parade; but the spectacle of Tom and his drum was too much for human gravity.

There was first a choke, and then an explosion all down the front ranks, and anything like the odd noises and yells that the rest of the band got out of their instruments instead of music I never could have imagined if I had not heard it.

In vain the officers who did not see, shouted; in vain the colonel roared.

For a moment there was some confusion, and then the great man of the day came up to see what was the matter. The colonel was inclined to be angry, for it was a serious hitch in the proceedings; but the duke—he was a real live duke—fairly roared with laughter at the sight of Tom held fast by the arm, and he was obliged to follow suit.

"Get him out some of you," he said, as soon as he could speak.

And they tried. There was nothing for it but to slit the parchment all across, and then Tom was loosened, looking very red and foolish, and not half liking being laughed at.

The two gentlemen looked at the drum as it lay on the ground, talking, I could see about the accident, and all at once I saw a change come over the colonel's face, and he stooped and put his hand inside of it. He looked like a man who has had an awful fright, and beckoned hurriedly to Tom.

I couldn't hear what he said, of course; but it seemed to me that Tom pointed out the window where I was, and he looked so pleased, poor dear. The parade went on when they had changed the drum, though I think they cut it a little short, and when it was over I was casting about how should I get to speak to my lad, when to my surprise the sergeant brought him into the room.

"The colonel wants to speak to you, Molly dear," he said, and there was a break in his voice as though he was crying.

"To me!" I said, half frightened.

"Yes; come along."

"What for?"

"I mustn't tell you; come on. He's waiting."

And he took me straight away to the colonel's quarters, and we were shown into the dining where the colonel was, and my mistress—and she had been crying poor dear—and the duke and all the servants.

Molly broke down at this point in the story a little, and Lord Grasslands smiled at her, and bade her finish it up.

"Cut it short, Molly," he said. "It was a bitter lesson to me, but I believe it saved many a poor fellow from punishment afterwards."

Thus adjured, Molly went on.

It was like a dream to me when my master came up to me and took hold of my hand.

"Molly," he said, "I have done you a great injustice, and I ask your pardon. See here."

And when he turned his hand I saw the diamond ring flashing and sparkling there as I had so often seen it in the olden time.

"Will you forgive me, Molly?" he asked, and his voice trembled as he spoke. "It was never in the house at all that day. I dropped it before I came in."

I burst out crying, and all I could say was, "I am so glad," and hold on to Tom's arm for fear I should fall.

They gave me a glass of wine, and my mistress shook hands with me and the duke!

I shall never forget that, and then they told me that the ring was in the drum.

The colonel must have dropped it when he was looking after it on that terrible day, and it had been wedged in screwing up the top, and only Tom's mishap had set it free.

"If you were a man, Molly," my master said, "I would have you out this evening and ask your pardon before the whole regiment; but they shall know you are no thief. I am glad to know it myself."

And he shook hands with me again, and said if I liked to come back to his house he'd make a place for me.

I did not do that, for leave was given to Tom to marry, and my mistress gave us a lot of nice things to help us on, and we managed very well till the regiment went to India, and my poor Tom died at sea.

It was hard to leave him under the cruel waves, and know that I could never even see the grass that covered him; but heaven sent me kind friends.

My mistress took me into her service again, and I'm proud to say I have been in the family ever since.

And that's all, Molly added, suddenly collapsing now her tale was done, and blushing furiously.

"Tisn't much of a story to tell to gentlefolks, but there's one thing about it that there ain't about all tales—it's true.

One New Year's Eve.

BY VERA SINGLETON.

To Miss Kathleen Blake,
Derrygra, Galway.
Tomakin, Edinburgh, Dec. 22, 1883.

My Dear Kathleen—Here I am at last, after such a journey! If I had only known about it, I should have stayed at home, so that now I am rather glad I did not know. That means that I am pretty comfortable, and quite charmed with all my surroundings. We are of Auld Reekie though scarcely in it, being perched upon the outskirts of it in a quite too charming house.

"When I jumped out of the carriage the night of my arrival, and stood in the small outer hall waiting for the bell to be answered, and peered curiously through the glass doors into the larger hall beyond, where a goodly fire was burning, I felt as if my lonely journey had not been for nothing after all. There were two large shaded lamps, that cast a rose-colored flame upon the parlor floor—the big fire I have already mentioned—and somewhat further back a dark oak staircase that faded off into gloom.

"Then a man threw open the door, and in another moment I found myself wrapped in the glow of the crimson lamps, and following my conductor obediently across the hall and down a passage, and round a corner, and into a recess, and goodness knows where, until we came to a—compartment shall I call it? At any rate it was antique in the way of ante-rooms, and a door in some obscure corner of it being thrown wide, I was ushered ceremoniously into a brilliantly lighted room beyond.

"I never saw so many corners in any room before in all my life; and it was full of men, and several dogs, all more or less in reposeful attitudes. There were no pink lamps in this room, and though it was singularly bright, I think it was only the pine logs on the open hearth that lit it. Lady Janet rose to welcome me, and was as gracious in her reception of me as Nature permitted.

"I felt a wee bit shy at first, and hardly knew what to say. But they were all very good to me, and the women said some pretty thing about our picturesque, if somewhat unpleasant land. One of them gently pushed me into a cushioned chair, and, unrequested, deprived me of my sealskin. Another administered to me my tea. It was sweet and strong, and such as my soul loveth. Oh! Katty; the very smell of it made me long for you and our little cosy chats at home. Surely no sister ever loved another as I love you! I said 'Yes,' and 'No,' to all their pretty speeches, as eloquently as I know how, but I was, on the whole, silent, and spent my time trying to learn by heart all the different warlike weapons that adorned the walls of this strange room.

"Lady Janet has really been quite extraordinarily kind to me, and has given me to understand that she hopes I will forget that she was only my father's step-sister, and try to think of her as his real own one. I have promised to do all that in me lies in this direction.

"And now, Katty, a last word. Don't let George come to Edinburgh. What's the good of it? I like him; but liking isn't loving, and I don't think I want him to love me. I've known him such a time. And when one has almost grown up with a person it makes all the difference. And the fact of his being a baronet doesn't count a scrap! And he is always looking at me so exactly as if he felt certain I should have him after all that he aggravates me. I want you to understand that I esteem George and all his solid qualities quite as much as you and mamma do—only that he worries me.

"Now, there is a man here who doesn't worry me. He calls himself my cousin, because he is a nephew of Lady Janet's; but really he isn't our cousin in any way. He is tall, handsome, distinguished. One likes him at a first glance. He is a little light and frivolous, perhaps, but very enjoyable; and—he fancies me! a great charm! After all, most women's likes and dislikes are bound and governed by the fact that somebody else likes or dislikes them.

"Let that be as it may, however, I confess I find a modest amount of pleasure in Darnley Bruce's conversational efforts, and in his near vicinity. I wish I had you in the next room, Katty, that I might go in and bore you a bit with my fancies; but as it is, I can only do it on paper—a more merciful way, as you can escape it if you will, with the fire so close at hand.

"Good-bye, my darling sister; and be sure you dissuade George from paying that visit her to Lady Janet he has so often threatened since I mentioned my determination to accept her last invitation. A kiss to the dearest of mothers.

"Ever your own,
"Norah."

To Miss Blake, Tomakin, Edinburgh.
Derrygra, Galway, Dec. 26, 1883.

"Darling Norah,—Look out for squalls! Because he has started! The mother having read your letter to me, let out the whole affair without meaning it. She told him how you were enjoying yourself, and what delightful people Lady Janet had gathered round her, and that there was one man in particular whom Norah seemed to have found especially interesting. You know what mamma is when she once begins! He had a flowing account I can tell you. I gave her a somewhat severe kick (we were at luncheon), which she bore like a martyr at the time, but for which I had a lecture afterwards. George was up in arms in a moment. I could see by the glitter of his eye, and the increased suavity of his manner. I write this hurriedly, to give you timely warning of his advance upon you. I was quite mad with poor mamma about her want of discrimination in mentioning to him your modern Darnley, and she, when I explained matters to her, professed to be equally mad with herself. But, to be candid, I didn't believe her. I know that in her soul she favors George, and would gladly see you Lady Blake. And I cannot wonder. George, to my thinking, suits you down to the ground; and I don't believe one bit in your hero with the romantic name.

"Dear Norah, don't stay too long with that pompous old woman and her nephew, or I shall do something desperate.

"Ever your loving sister,
"Kathleen."

Christmas had come and gone, and a New Year was at hand.

To Norah Blake the past three weeks spent in her aunt's Scottish home had proved far from unpleasant, though it had been with a doubting heart she had accepted the invitation.

There had been moments, indeed, which were altogether pleasant—moments, indeed in which Mr. Bruce had a good deal to do.

He had fallen into her life at once, from the first hour when he saw her enter the firelit room, tall and pale, and faintly smiling, and had found himself a little later on rather wrapt up in the arranging of her movements, and almost of her thoughts.

He had begun by declaring he would make her visit a pleasant one to her, and had ended by finding that it would be a pleasant one for him.

She was fresh, delightful, even a little amusing; one forgot to yawn when with her, one forgot a good deal, indeed, that one might better have remembered, perhaps were the truth told.

But to be able to forget successfully at times is a very comfortable gift.

The first few days had gone charmingly, and others might have followed as smoothly but for a new element that was thrown into their midst, in the person of the stalwart, solemn looking young Irishman, Sir George Blake.

To Norah, even though his coming had been foretold to her by a faithful sister, his sudden descent upon all the surrounding frivolity had been something of a shock.

At times in her quiet home in Ireland, she found him now and then a trifle oppressive; here he was immeasurably more so.

He was, yet he was not her lover.

He had, indeed, gone as far in that direction as she would permit, and had certainly conveyed to her the impression that he fully intended to go farther.

He had not in actual words asked her to marry him, but there was not a shadow of doubt that he meant to do so on any occasion that might happen to strike him as being favorable to the possibility of his receiving to his question the answer he desired.

He was calm, methodical, by no means an ideal lover, but he was very good looking, and there was a standing solidity about him that carried its own weight and compelled her at times to think more of him than suited her.

As for Darnley Bruce, he was altogether different.

He was as light as the other was solid, and knew more of the world's ways in his thirty years than Sir George would have discovered in a lifetime.

He was a tall dark man, with an appealing, half-subdued manner that hinted at

love making, but that seldom overstepped the limit or made himself in any way uncomfortable.

He was, Norah told herself, everything he ought to be, and she gave herself up unconditionally to the enjoyment of his perfections, and the arrangements he made for her well-being.

And now it was the eve of a New Year: To-morrow would see it dawn!

They were all a little depressed in spite of many efforts to the contrary, and Lady Janet was undisguisedly sleepy.

Sir George, the only guest that night, tired perhaps, of listening to Norah's laughter as she sat apart with Bruce, had taken an early departure, almost immediately, indeed, after dinner; and at nine precisely Lady Janet rose from her couch and declared her intention of seeking her maid forthwith and the couch that was to know on that damsel's administrations.

Norah, a little dismayed at the idea of having so early to seek a repose in which she was of no need, rose too.

"You need not come quite yet. You may stay a little longer, dear, and entertain Darnley," said Lady Janet, with drowsy good-nature. "But don't sit up too late. See to that Darnley."

She smiled at them in a listless fashion, and then faded sleepily away.

Norah glanced ruefully at her companion. "That means half an hour's grace, no more," she said, "and I dare not begin to tell you until the spirit moves me. To see Aunt Janet speak makes one feel as though one was a baby!"

She laughed, but there was unmistakable vexation in her mirth.

"Well don't do it," said Darnley.

Then he looked at her suddenly as though some thought had just occurred to him. "It is New Year's Eve," he said, "and the city will be illuminated, and there will be rejoicings of a rather unique character in certain parts of it. You, who live so far from us and our customs, should know something of our lower classes. Lady Janet is in bed, and the world lies before us. Let us play truant for once. Put on your ulster and the hat that you least esteem and let us sally forth in search of some knowledge."

"I don't think," said Norah, hesitating, "that I much care for knowledge. There should be something else."

"There will be adventure. Cannot even that stir you? There will be the certainty that if discovered, condemnation will fall upon our heads."

"There is the thought that the estimable Sir George (who plainly regards you with open disapproval) would look with scorn upon your conduct. And——"

"Yes—let us go," interrupted she lightly, flushing and lifting eyes to his, that burned with a quick yet sombre fire.

A few minutes later she stole down, wrapped in a warm fur cloak and gently hooded, and together they stepped across the hall with its pink shaded lamps, opened the hall door for themselves, and, unknown to the household, emerged into the darkness of the night.

It was a quaint old-fashioned street in which they soon found themselves, and it might have been a city of the dead, so still it was, so replete with an unbroken calm.

From this they went on chatting, sight-seeing, wandering about, and taking no note of time.

Suddenly Norah, pausing, glanced at her companion, and then burst out laughing.

"Why, where are we?" she said, glancing somewhat timidly to the right and left. "Where are all the people to whom this street means home?"

"Probably they have gone to bed," said Bruce, laughing.

"To bed!" She started violently. "At this hour!"

"Why, what hour do you think it is?" asked he, a little surprised at her surprise.

"Ten, perhaps?" faltered she, a little nervously.

"Ten? Have you forgotten that it is the New Year's Eve? It is—twelve," said Bruce, reluctantly, taking out his watch and pretending to examine it beneath the light of the street lamp.

"Oh; no!" said the girl in a horrified tone.

She clasped her hands, and a look of passionate distress darkened her face, and deepened the curves of her beautiful lips. "I forgot everything—the hour, the occasion the morning of it all! But we must get home; that is the principal thing now," she exclaimed, turning to him with a pitiful attempt at composure. "What would Lady Janet say if she heard of this?" Then another terrible thought struck her. "How shall we get in? The servants will be astir."

"That will be quite right enough. I have a latch-key, but——" he was gloomily vexed with himself, and stopped short in his speech.

"But what?" sharply.

"I confess I don't quite know where we are," he acknowledged with a rather forced laugh that marred her even more than his assertion.

"Come," she said coldly, "we must walk on at a pace, and ask—we must somebody who can tell us where our home lies."

And now the mist that had overhung the town, covering it as with a shroud, was getting deeper, and the stars were twinkling grimly in the sky.

They still turned down one street and walked up another.

But they did not know where their steps were taking them.

Two people only they had met, and both were useless.

Again a clock sounded in the distance. It struck the half-hour.

"This is growing too terrible," said Norah, stooping short and pressing her hand to her heart. "It cannot last, or it will kill me."

Even as she spoke, the sound of rapidly approaching footsteps came to them.

Norah almost ran to meet them, and presently could see the man to whom they belonged standing out clearly from the intense darkness behind him.

And as she saw him, she came to an abrupt standstill, and turned eagerly to Bruce, who had joined her.

Her heart seemed to cease beating, and she knew that her face was growing, not only white, but cold.

Who was it?

What fanciful resemblance was this? Surely Fate could not do her so base a turn!

Even as she stood and stared blankly at him, with parted lips and wide, horror-stricken eyes, the figure emerged into the fuller light of the near lamp, and stood revealed as Sir George Blake.

Norah made a sudden retreat—a sharp movement suggestive of the like, that for a moment she had dwelt upon the possibility of being able to hide herself behind her companion.

Then she conquered the undignified desire, and as a means of proving that she had never trembled it, she went obstinately forward and, confronted Sir George as he strode rigidly upright in the centre of the street.

Quicker an instant, however, did he so stand that the keen pain he suffered then, was subdued almost as it came to life.

He recovered himself wonderfully, before Bruce had time to notice the shock he had sustained, and at all events before Norah had realized the eternity of it.

He was ghastly pale, but his voice as he spoke was perfectly under control.

"Ah! so you too ventured out to see the sights," he said, addressing himself exclusively to Norah. "Not altogether so good a thing as one had been led to believe. Are you on your way home?"

"If you can only tell us that," said she with a poor attempt at unconcern. She tried to laugh but failed, and was unhappily conscious of her failure. "The fact is," she said, breaking down a little, "we have lost our way."

"An awkward time to lose it," returned he with a pale smile.

"So awkward that, if you can, I hope you will help us," said Bruce with a frown.

"Yes, help us," said Norah in a low tone.

"If you will follow me," he said coldly, still addressing Norah, "I think I can lead you to a stand, where one cab, at least, may be found."

They followed him as culprits might and got their cab.

That he had asked for no explanation of her extraordinary appearance there, at that hour of the night, struck cold upon the girl's heart.

Yes, he had condemned her.

Without a word—without giving her a chance of clearing herself he had condemned her! It was hard!

He declined a seat in the cab, and went away from the door of it after carefully putting her into it, without a spoken good-night, and with no courtesy indeed beyond the very faintest lifting of his hat.

Her drive home was one of unbroken silence, and when she got safely to her room without rousing a member of the household, she flung herself upon her bed and burst into a passion of tears.

* * * * * *

Next morning Lady Janet was closeted for a considerable time with a very early visitor, who would take no denial.

As he took his departure she rang her bell sharply, and demanded that Miss Blake would come to her at once.

Miss Blake came; not without some trepidation, her conscience being anything but clear.

And then it all came out.

Lady Janet in some mysterious fashion, had been made aware of last night's dreadful escapade.

Her niece had been seen at midnight in the streets of Edinburgh with Darnley Bruce.

It was horrible, shameful.

She declined to say who her informant was; she only asked if the information were true.

Was it true?

She sat in judgment and gazed at the terrified girl with a cruel sternness.

"Yes," said Norah faintly.

Lady Janet, too, was apparently deprived of speech by the openness of this small avowal on the girl's part.

"If it had been anyone but an engaged man," she said at last, looking at the girl with contemptuous eyes.

"Engaged!"

The word fell from Norah's lips with startling rapidity. She looked fixedly at Lady Janet. That she was thoroughly roused now was quite plain to the elder woman.

"Yes, engaged. Had he not the decency to tell you? He has been engaged to Miss Prendergast, a girl of no family, but with a large fortune. Darnley is a man of expensive tastes, and is bound to marry someone who can help him to gratify them. He could not afford to marry a poor girl."

"You should have told me all this before, you, my guardian for the—the time being," said Norah in a choked voice. "It never occurred to me that he was not heart-whole; that there was an honorable reason why he should be regarded as different from other men; men without a tie. To my mind he is as much married as though the words of our church had been read over him."

"Were he married or single there is no excuse for your conduct of last night: it is a most distressing affair altogether. I'm sure I don't know how I am to explain it to your mother," went on Lady Janet presently.

"That trouble I can at least spare you," returned Norah haughtily. "I can go home and explain it to her myself."

"Well, perhaps that would be the better plan," said Lady Janet slowly.

She rose from her seat as she said this, and as if a little afraid to look at the girl, moved noiselessly from the room.

For a long hour Norah sat there silent, almost motionless, until a step in the anteroom outside compelled her to raise her head, and see that it was Darnley Bruce that had entered the room and was now standing before her.

She rose involuntarily.

"My aunt has just told me," he began, with a little amused air, "that she has been criticising, somewhat unkindly, our very harmless adventure of last evening. Has her criticism vexed you?"

"Certainly," said Norah, gravely.

"Then let it do so no longer. Let us make the impropriety of these prudes—proper."

He hesitated and laughed lightly.

"If a girl were to walk abroad at any hour with her affianced husband, very little would be said—isn't that so?" he asked, still smiling.

"I don't know," replied Norah, regarding him steadily with large expectant eyes.

Unconsciously she afforded him encouragement.

"Place me in that position, Norah," said he, quickly. "Tell me that I shall one day be your husband."

A sudden fervor fell into his usually nonchalent voice.

His face changed and grew singularly earnest.

The smile died from it.

"You!" she said.

She looked at him strangely for a minute or so, and then her eyes fell to the ground.

"And how about Miss Prendergast?" she went on very gently, her closed lips growing full of meaning.

He colored warmly.

"You have heard then," he exclaimed. "That was a folly—a madness I have recovered from."

"She is pretty—an heiress!"

"She is not your equal. And it is all over now. A week ago I wrote to her to—absolve her from her promise to me."

"A week ago!"

"A full week. And now I am free to wed you, Norah."

Did she shrink from him as he eagerly approached her?

"Only a week," she said, raising her her hand reflectively to her forehead. "And before that?" Her pause here was so slight, that if he had meant to explain matters, his hesitation in doing so went almost unmarked. "It is all very strange," she finished, with a deep sigh.

"Strange that I should change my fancied admiration for another to my strong love for you? It would have been stranger had I not done so. And now you will take pity on me," said he, smiling fondly. "You will name our wedding day—a near day. You will marry me, Norah?"

"Oh! as to that," she answered, gravely, "that is impossible!"

"Impossible!"

"Quite—quite so!"

"I don't think I understand," said Bruce, making a strong effort at composure, but growing extremely pale. "Do you mean to tell me that after all that has passed between us you now mean to reject me?"

She looked up at him steadily and very coldly.

"After all what?" she demanded a little haughtily.

"After all our happy hours spent together. Hours in which you drew my heart from out my body and made it yours. Will you destroy that heart?"

"Ah!" she said, gently, "I do not think I shall destroy it. A month ago it was hers; to-day it is mine, and to-morrow——"

She paused, and ran her slender fingers, with an absent air, along the edge of the antique cabinet near her.

"This is trifling!" cried he, angrily. "I tell you that for your sake I have thrown up fortune, and now you say you will have nothing to do with me. I have given up that other girl to gain you."

"I am sorry for that other girl," repeated she, a sudden tear in her eyes.

"You need not," returned he, with a bitter laugh. "Believe me, she requires no consideration. She was glad to be released. She cares for me quite as little as you do."

"I am sorry," she said again, but this time she looked at him, and he could see that there was genuine kindly regret in her tone.

It was a glance fatal to his hopes, yet it seemed to moisten his parched soul.

"You will have pity," he entreated, laying his fingers lightly on her arm. "What is it that stands between us? What has that old woman said? What is it you can't forgive?"

"There is nothing!" she declared, eagerly. "I forgive—I don't know even what it is I have to forgive. It is only"—her voice sank a little, and she half turned away—"that now I know I could never have loved you. There, go," she whispered hurriedly, a moment later, as steps could be heard outside drawing nearer and nearer to the door. "Go before Lady Janet comes to question, to learn that you—you asked, and I had nothing to give!"

He straightened himself, and with a swift glance at her, quitted the room by the upper door.

As he did so the lower one was opened and someone came in.

After all it was not Lady Janet—it was only Sir George Blake.

"Lady Janet tells me you are thinking of returning home," he began, hardly looking at her. "I fear she has been unwarrantably severe with you. But it will be wise to make allowances. To go back now in such hot haste to Derrygra seems to me the very height of folly."

"She has left me no alternative," said Norah. "She was too angry to be reasonable. She was not so unwarrantably severe as unpardonably rude! Of course, I shall go. Kathleen, at least understands me, and mamma always knows. I am not afraid of their verdict. As for Lady Janet, she has behaved abominably. What was it all but a mistake. My mind was so occupied—I was so interested in the people—the scene—the strange weirdness of the effect—that I forget everything. But," laughingly, "forgetfulness is not a crime!"

"No," said he, meditatively, his eyes on the carpet. "And, as you say, you were so interested."

"In the people—the whole scene," she repeated, impatiently. "But Lady Janet would not listen."

"She will be sorry for them herself, by and by. I think, perhaps, she is sorry for them even now," said Blake. "Sometimes, too, she speaks of things that are not quite understood by her. Perhaps——" He hesitated, and then went on: "Perhaps she spoke to you of Bruce's engagement?"

"Yes."

"She does not know the truth about that affair. Bruce is no longer engaged to be married. He has broken off all ties that bound him to Miss Prendergast. He is a free man."

"You have been speaking to him?" said the girl, regarding him fixedly.

"Yes."

He looked past her, out of the window, and frowned slightly.

"You see," he said slowly, "in a measure I feel bound to look after you—your interests—your happiness!"

It was with a visible effort he made this speech, yet his voice was unbroken, and his gaze was not lowered.

"It is very good of you," said Norah, a faint inflection of sarcasm in her tone. "And what is it you want to do for me now?"

A short silence followed on her question. Then—

"Bruce loves you," said Sir George slowly. "He is a man of good position, of excellent family; he is a man with many friends!"

He broke off abruptly, and came a step nearer to her.

"I have been assured," he said, "that the dearest wish of his heart is to make you his wife!"

Norah moved as if involuntarily, and raised to his a very pale face wreathed in a cold disdainful smile.

"All that, I know," she said. "He told me everything just before you came in."

Sir George started violently.

"As for me, I do not love, and I shall never marry Mr. Bruce. He quite understands that. He is gone. It is unlikely I shall ever see him again."

"You refused him?"

"Yes, yes! Why will you make me repeat it," cried she with some suppressed vehemence.

For a long time neither of them spoke. Then she raised her head and sighed heavily.

She turned her eyes to his.

"Will you leave me," she murmured in her gentlest tone.

He rose at once to do my bidding.

"You meant to be kind, I suppose. I believe," she said, in a low voice, "and I thank you. But you have given me many things to think of, and I would wish to be alone."

He moved away from her down the room, but as he got to the door he paused and looked back at her, his hand upon the handle.

"If you won't marry him, will you marry me?" he said.

She let her arms fall to her side.

"Oh! George," she cried.

"Well?" said he, looking at her.

Perhaps what he saw decided him, because he dropped the handle of the door and went back to her.

"Well?" he said again, but in a very different voice this time, being now in full possession of her trembling hands.

"I know I shouldn't have been there last night," she confessed humbly. "But I did so want to know what it was all about."

"And now you know," said he.

She blushed hotly beneath his grave glance and the indirect meaning of his words.

"Yes; I know," she murmured. "And after all it was not so very much. I didn't care about it. You will believe that?"

"I will," said he tenderly. I understand all. And as you say there was nothing so very much in it after all."

"Still I should not have gone," whispered she penitently, lifting to his face her lovely, plaintive eyes. "It was wrong of me, very wrong. Think, George! Consider well what I have done. The world is sometimes unkind, and what will people say?"

"That is my affair," said George Blake, as he bent down and sealed his forgiveness with a kiss.

Our Young Folks.

AT LITTLE COST.

BY PIPKIN.

"It's too bad, I declare; I shan't have a penny left by the time Christmas comes," said Minnie Blake, looking up from some papers upon which she had been dotting down various memoranda, and pushing back her hair which had fallen over her face.

"What's the matter, Minnie? What are you looking so grave about?" asked her sister Laura. "I have been watching you for the last ten minutes, afraid to speak, you seemed immersed in such deep calculations."

"So I was, Laura. I have been wondering whatever I shall do about Christmas presents this year. I want to give something to lots of people, but twenty dollars does not leave much to spare for presents, when it has to include a half year's dress and various little expenses besides. In fact, I believe I shall commence December with exactly twenty-five cents to the good."

"Indeed, I'm just in the same predicament, Min. Let's put our heads together, and see what we can devise. I wish Alice Brown was here, she is such a capital hand at contriving things out of nothing."

"Yes, isn't she? By the way, I asked her to come in to-night, and"—as a ring at the bell was heard—"I do believe that is she."

So it proved to be, and in a few minutes Alice was snugly settled in the arm-chair with her two friends on the rug beside her.

"We were just speaking of you, Alice, as you rung," said Laura, "and wishing for your assistance."

"In what way?" inquired Alice. "You know you are quite welcome to any I can give you."

"Thank you. Our thoughts were occupied with Christmas presents and penniless pockets. How to make the one come out of the other."

"Oh!" said Alice, laughing. "That is a subject which has often occupied my mind——"

"Yes, and how you manage to make so many pretty things out of nothing, as you do, I can't imagine," interrupted Minnie.

"Shall I tell you my great secret?" said Alice.

"Please."

"Well, it is this—I never throw away anything which may come in useful. I made a large bag some time ago, and into it I put every scrap of stuff I have to spare, every old box, and, in fact, anything at all that may be turned to account. It was to my aunt Jane that I was indebted for that advice, and very useful I have found it."

"Well, then, Alice, you must have an especial lot of very good things in that bag. Now we only have the veriest rubbish."

"I have no more than you. Now see here, Minnie," she continued, noting the look of incredulity in her companion's face, "what do you do with all your odd pieces and things?"

"Oh, nothing. That is, I leave them about in my drawers until those get too full, and then I have a grand clearance and give them to Anne to dispose of."

"Just what I thought, my dear. Now, what do you say, Minnie, to our adjourning up to your room, and seeing what may be done with you 'rubbish,' as you call it?"

"Oh, Alice, you darling! Will you really? Come along then," said both the girls, jumping up. "But," continued Minnie, "I hope you won't be shocked when you see the state of confusion my wardrobe is in. I do try to tidy up occasionally, but whenever I do I'm sure to put away my things so carefully that I forget where they are, and then have to pull out everything in searching. Now, here we are, Alice, you take the chair, Laura, you may sit on the bed if you like, and take notes of what the oracle has to say."

"Now, Minnie, begin at the first drawer, and put out all your rubbish that we may examine it."

"Well," said Minnie, obediently depositing an armful of pieces on the floor, "there's not much there, I imagine. Some old ribbons, the pieces left of two summer dresses, soiled lace——"

"Here's something to start with," exclaimed Alice, seizing a piece of Turkey red stuff, which was printed round with some pretty bit of pattern. "I think those little spriggy patterns are just the prettiest there are. Now, Minnie, this is quite large enough to cover one of those pretty pincushions, and the addition of some of that lace, previously washed and stamped in tea to give it a pretty brown tint, would make a capital wall pocket for somebody's drawing-room."

"Yes, so it would," said Minnie. "But I don't quite know how they are made."

"Oh, very easily. You first cover the leaf, either plain or with the stuff folded on, which ever you prefer. Then gather a piece very fully to the shape of leaf the first and stitch it on to make the pocket. You can put the lace at the edges, and on the top too, if you like. It is a good plan to run a piece of elastic along the top of the pocket; it keeps it from bulging out."

"That will do capitally for auntie," said Laura; "but do you leave the handle bare, Alice?"

"Oh, no. I forgot. You twist ribbon round it, and make a bow on the top, by which it is hung up. Here is some ribbon that will do quite well, she proceeded, picking a piece out of the heterogeneous mass before her. "Minnie, what an extravagant girl you are! These bows would be as good as new if you did not toss them about so."

"Yes, dear, but don't begin to lecture me on my sins, or we shall have no time for anything else. What did you propose doing with that Turkey red?"

"First, tell me, do you wear paper collars?"

"Yes, sometimes. They are very convenient for traveling and for when you are on a visit, I think."

"So do I. But the reason I asked was because I want the boxes. What do you do with them?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Minnie, opening another drawer. "Perhaps there are some here. Yes, one—two—three—here are four; but of what use are they?"

"Well, if I had them I should transform two of them into a pair of pincushions, and the other two into boxes for odds and ends."

"How?" asked both the girls.

"Let us take the pincushion first. Make a firm cushion to fit the box, and cover it with a piece of the Turkey red. Then make a flounce of the same material, just the depth of the box, and stitch it on at the top. You may hide the place of joining if you like, either by a piping of the red, or a small frill of lace. Furnish one with white pins and the other with black."

"Those are splendid."

"Now for the boxes. They are also very easily made. Make a flounce, as you did for the pincushions, only not quite so deep, and stitch it to the box just where the lid reaches to when it is on. Then cover the lid, slightly stuffing it on the top, and put a smaller flounce round it to reach to the top of the first. You can either line the inside of the box or not, as you please. These are very useful for holding hairpins or other odd things belonging to the toilet table."

"I thank you, Alice. I shall certainly try one of those for Maria, she is always losing hairpins. Now have you any other suggestions?"

"Well, yes, I think so. Shall you think me very inquisitive if I ask you a few questions about the contents of your store-room?"

"Our store-room?" cried Minnie, looking surprised, "oh, no, not at all; but what the one has to do with the other I cannot divine."

"I'll soon show you," said Alice, laughing. "Have you any of those small tins of potted meat?"

"Yes, we often have them."

"Well, save the next empty one, and get the top cut out neatly. Then have some pieces of cork, roughly broken up into small pieces, and thickly cover the outside of the tin with these, fastening on by strong glue. If you can afford to varnish it afterwards, so much the better. They make the most charming little flower-holders you can conceive."

"Only fancy? I could not imagine to what use they were to be put. I have seen picture-frames made of cork like that, and they really looked very pretty."

"I'm sure they would; and have you not noticed the little things my ferns grow in—my miniature fernery, as I call it. It is made out of those long oval tins in which herrings are preserved; and those I cover in the same way, fill with earth, and grow small ferns, such as the stonecrop in them. They look very pretty on the table. Others I have seen covered with twigs, and bits of fir cone, and acorn cups. They are even prettier than the cork."

"Really, Alice, you are as good as a fairy godmother, and make me feel quite rich. What's the matter, Laura?" as that young lady jumped up with an exclamation.

"Why, talking about the store-room reminded me of something else Constance showed me. You know those tin match-box-holders that come in the packages of matches? Well her aunt had painted half a dozen of those so prettily with little landscape scenes. You know it's very convenient to have a box of matches on every mantelpiece, and those cases make them look quite ornamental, which they are not usually."

"But, Laura, neither you nor I can paint, so I can't see——"

"Of course, I know that, my dear. What I was going to suggest was, that they might be covered with cork, like the flower-pots."

"Yes, so they might. That's a new idea for us, Laura," said Alice. "Did you see anything else that would be useful for us?"

"No. Yes, though—perhaps I did. I saw some plates which were rather pretty. They were ordinary common waste paper, costing I suppose, a penny or two each, and from one had a pattern. One was with stamps of various kinds, arranged in patterns, another had cards, and another autumn leaves. They were all gummed on, and then varnished over. When mounted in velvet they really looked very handsome."

"Well, I think you will be able to provide a fair amount of presents after all," said Alice. "Oh, here's some cousin. Now, if you were to invest in a penny's worth of lavender, and to add to it a little dried thyme, mint, ground cloves, carraway seeds and salt, you could make some delicious scent sachets, for placing among pocket-handkerchiefs."

"Just what mamma loves. Thank you very much, Alice, for your help; you have lifted quite a weight off my mind, and I am sure you have nobly earned the cup of tea which I hear Anne carrying in."

THE LITTLE WAX WOMAN.

BY M. THORNE.

WAS it a real doll? Oh, yes, just an ordinary doll, and nothing more. It was given as a present to a little girl one Christmas, and it saved three hundred lives?

Yes, it is a fact. It really happened. Shall I tell you how?

She was a nice wax doll, with blue eyes and pretty curling hair, dressed in shining satin, with a beautiful sash:

Golden spangles glittered in the folds of her skirt.

On the edge of the United States, on a strip of land which had once belonged to Mexico, there was a wild tribe of Red Indians, called the Apaches.

Their home was in the midst of the rocks—a little grassy valley, with a pretty stream running through it.

The rocks rose up so steep and straight on every side, that no one could enter the valley, except by a cleft in the rocks, like a gateway—a little pass that was very easily guarded.

These Apaches were very fierce, and when they had not food enough they would rush down from their lonely hills, and seize what they wanted and kill the farmers. The country was full of dreadful tales of the men and women and children they had murdered.

Many people said it was impossible to live in safety near them.

They were so wild, no one could get at them to reason with them.

None of them could speak English. The Government sent a party of soldiers to protect the people, and fight with these Indians.

Now the Red Indians are very brave, and everybody said they would fight until they were all killed.

But the general who commanded the soldiers said nothing, for he pitied those courageous savages.

He knew their Spanish neighbors had treated these Indians very cruelly in times past, until they looked upon all white men as their deadly enemies.

He wanted to show them how really he was to be their friend if they would let him.

So the general led on his men very quietly, and waited while he sent his scouts before him to find out all they could about the home of these Apaches.

When the scouts returned, they told the general there were about three hundred in the village.

The general waited and watched to see what the Red men would do.

After a few days, a small party came away from the village and made themselves three lodges lower down the hill. They did not seem as if they knew the soldiers were so near them, for they brought their wives and children with them.

"Now," said all the soldiers, "we can pounce upon this party, unawares—take them by surprise—that is what the general must do. They cannot resist us long."

But the kind-hearted general had a far better plan.

He sent a number of his dragoons up into the hill at night, when the Indians were asleep—not to shoot them, but to make them prisoners.

One of his cleverest scouts led the way up the rocky heights, where the horsemen would not be seen under the shadow of the trees.

Here they hid themselves in the day, and watched their opportunity.

As it grew dark, when the Indians were once more asleep, they rode out softly from their hiding places, and surrounded the three lodges, so that not one of the Red men could get away to rouse the others in the village.

The Indian chiefs were bound in their sleep and only woke up to find themselves prisoners.

No one was hurt.

There was an Indian family in each lodge.

The soldiers seized them all, women and children too, set them on their fastest horses, and galloped off.

The soldiers returned to the general's camp with their prisoners about two o'clock the next morning.

The general came with his interpreters, who understood the Indian language, to talk to them.

I wish you could have seen those savage chiefs in their war paint and feathers seated on the ground, with their fingers tapped round their heads in sullen silence. The Red man knows nothing of fear. He seems to utter a complaint, suffer what he may. They were handsome fellows, more than six feet high, with intelligent black eyes and long black hair.

Their sons sat round them, copying their fathers in everything.

Their wives sat at their feet, mute and motionless.

They were all expecting instant death. Only the little girls, in their white deerskin dresses, were too young to understand what had happened.

They clung to their fathers and mothers, who loved them fondly.

For two whole days the general tried in vain to make them talk.

Not one would utter a single word, or listen to anything the interpreters were told to say.

The Indians behaved just as a wild animal will do when it is caught.

They skulked and scowled, and refused all advances. What could the soldiers do with them?

Then the general called his lieutenant, and they went together to the prison camp, where these poor Apaches were sitting in their grim silence.

The general took up one little girl in his arms, and carried her away; the lieutenant took up the other, and followed him.

The terrified children shrieked and struggled.

There was agony in the hearts of their fathers and mothers, for they thought—"These white men will kill the children first, and then they will kill us." But even then they would not speak one word or shed a single tear.

The general and his lieutenant walked off with their little captives to the general's own tent.

He was a fatherly man, and he thought that little girls' hearts were much alike all the world over.

So he set his screaming captive on his knee, and tried his best to pacify her.

The lieutenant followed his leader's example.

> "He would not do the fair child harm,
> But held it with his powerful arm,
> That it could neither fight nor flee."

I am afraid it was a very harm day's work for him, for he had no family of his own, and knew nothing about baby-children.

The little creatures shrieked, and howled, and yelled in their passionate terror, kicking and scratching, and biting at their strange nurses, who held them so fast, they could not get away from them. The general tried to coax them with sugar and candy, but it was of no use.

The children kept on struggling and screaming like little furies, until they were worn out with their crying, and first one and then the other sobbed itself to sleep.

The general laid the child he had been nursing down on his own couch.

Then he sent his orderly to the nearest family where he knew there was a little girl.

Now, what should you think for? To borrow a doll.

I fancy that gave, stern soldier must have smiled.

Certainly he had never been sent on such an errand before.

The little girl's mamma sent one directly—the very Christmas doll I have been describing to you, with her rosy cheeks and bright blue eyes and spangled skirt. The general set it up at the foot of the couch, just where the sleeping child would be sure to see it when she opened her eyes.

Then he sat down in a corner of his tent, quite out of sight, and waited until his prisoner wakened of her own accord.

Now, imagine the ecstasy of the Indian child, who had never had a doll in her life, who had never even dreamed there was such a thing in the world as a doll.

How she stared at it! How venturingly she touched it!

How she ate her lunch given to her companion, while she kept her eyes, to some one knows, for fear it should vanish!

It is wonderful how soon the sight of the doll called forth the Indian girl's forgotten mother tongue.

She scrambled to the ground, with the doll in her arms, to show it to her sister.

Can you fancy the two queer little creatures in their white fur dresses, ornamented with a kind of rude embroidery, done with a porcupine's quill instead of a needle, with their dark, ruddy faces, and eyes as black as little bits of coal, sitting on the floor of the general's tent, hugging and kissing their new found treasure?

When the general saw that everything was forgotten in the pleasure of the doll, he brought the sugar and the candy, and set it on the floor beside the children, and this time, being really hungry, they took it, and liked the taste.

Then he sent to the prison camp, and fetched their mother.

When the Red woman was brought to the door of the tent, she could scarcely believe her senses.

There were the precious babies she was mourning over, playing happily together with the wondrous doll, while the general fed them with lumps of sugar and candy.

The lieutenant, I believe, was trying his hand at cutting out paper horses.

The cry of joy and gratitude that went up from that wild mother's heart told the general he had succeeded.

She at least would listen to him now.

He could not understand the childish prattle in the soft Indian tongue, but he saw by the mother's eyes she was sharing in the children's joy.

By and by he sent her back to the other prisoners, to tell the story in her own way.

It was easy work now to persuade the Indians the general wished to be their friend.

After a while, when his prisoners had grown quite friendly, he trusted them to go back to the other Apaches in the Indian village with messages and the white flag of peace.

They stood to each other they learned to love and trust the general there was no harm in, and, some of the Indian chiefs said when he had told the story, "It was the little wax woman did it all."

Don't neglect your cough! Ayer's Cherry Pectoral will quickly cure it and prevent consumption.

GROWING OLD.

BY MATTHEW ARNOLD.

What is it to grow old?
Is it to lose the glory of the form,
The lustre of the eye?
Is it for beauty to forego her wreath?
Yes, but not this alone.

Is it to feel our strength,
Not our bloom only, but our strength decay?
Is it to feel each limb
Grow stiffer, every function less exact,
Each nerve more loosely strung?

Yes, this, and more; but not,
Ah! 'tis not what in youth we dreamed 'twould be.
'Tis not to have our life
Mellowed and softened as with sunset-glow,
A golden day's decline.

'Tis not to see the world,
As from a height, with rapt prophetic eyes,
And heart profoundly stirred;
And weep, and feel the fulness of the past,
The years that are no more.

It is to spend long days,
And not once feel that we were ever young;
It is to add, immured
In the hot prison of the present, month
To month with weary pain.

It is to suffer this,
And feel but half, and feebly, what we feel.
Deep in our hidden heart
Festers the dull remembrance of a change;
But no emotion, none.

It is, last stage of all,
When we are frozen up within, and quite
The phantom of ourselves,
To hear the world applaud the hollow ghost,
Which blamed the living man.

CHRISTMAS TOYS.

Of carpentering I must confess to little or no knowledge, though I believe it to be a most useful accomplishment, especially as the time for making articles for the Christmas tree draws near, so in the present paper I can only deal with such toys as can be manufactured with the needle, and these principally are connected with dolly's attire and knickknacks for her house.

I believe I shall never grow too old to admire dolls, or to forget the visits paid in past years to the toy shops, where the beauties with blue eyes and fair hair which filled the cases received my warmest admiration, or the shop in the adjoining street where, I fancy, some of them first saw the light.

That shopkeeper did not part with his best, for certainly the most pearly complexions, the softest hair of golden hue, the most bewitching smiles, the most touchingly retrousse noses were to be seen in that shop window, which I look for now in vain. Like other lovely visions of the past, it has vanished.

Now, as a writer in one of the daily papers puts it, "Dolls are our children's children, and therefore our grandchildren," it behooves us to look to it that they are appareled as becomes their station in life. We cannot let them be dressed in the styles worn ten years ago, when their mammas are attired in the fashion of 1885, so we must make them becoming "granny" bonnets to set off their pretty round cheeks, and fur muffs to keep their fingers from getting cold.

The bonnets, with large crowns of white satin and gathered brims, are the counterparts of those we see at the milliners' made on a small scale.

Tam O'Shanter hats have become common, but the Henry VIII. bonnets could be easily made, and would probably be a novel present for a little girl. Plush or velvet is the best material for them; the crowns are full and flat, and the brims narrow. If the band is fastened with a buckle of cut beads, and a little feather is stuck in it, they will be greatly prized.

A muff, collarette, and a pair of cuffs, are not difficult to produce, although it is rather awkward to make such small things neatly, but they are worth the trouble for the pleasure they give.

Some persons are adverse to what others might call "niggling work," and no one who is, should attempt to make dolls' clothes, for they must of necessity come under this category, and if they are not neatly worked they are next to valueless. These sets can be composed of white or brown fur, lined with blue or red silk for children, as a rule, like bright colors. Little fancy muffs can also be made, like those now so fashionable, of silk and lace, with a feather ornament.

Necklaces, earrings, etc., cannot by any means be counted amongst the novelties, but they are sure to be acceptable, and look bright when hung on a tree. They should, when finished, be sewn on a card so as to be seen to the greatest advantage, and also to avoid the chance of their being lost. Round beads of blue or red color can be strung on fine elastic, and they will not then require any clasp; and a bead with a piece of wire fixed in it serves for an earring.

Silk mittens for dolly will invariably be seized upon with delight, and anyone who is clever at netting could make half a dozen pairs without much trouble, and thus give enjoyment to as many little girls. They are prettiest when made in blue, pink or gold silk.

A set of doll's toilet mats will be new to some children. They are white, and a border in fine crewel stitch is worked on each; a suitable design, such as a brush, looks well on these, and it can be carried out in a few stitches.

Perambulator rugs can be made of white satin sheeting or oatmeal cloth, and worked in crewels with dolly's monogram in one corner; or a small square of white fur can be lined with colored cloth to be used as a covering to keep her warm during her drives in the winter months.

But I must not neglect the small fry of the community, for they are always favorites, as they can have a house of their own, and sit down to dinner in a handsomely furnished room and enjoy the delectable morsels cooked in the spotlessly clean kitchen adjoining.

Boxes containing nine little dolls are sold now. Some I have seen are equipped in netted floss silk costumes, after the same mode as the larger ones dressed in crocheted wool that have been so popular of late.

But I should prefer a variety in costumes, as well as in size, then I can imagine no more gratifying present for a child who possesses a doll's house.

A small cradle is a valuable adjunct to the house. The basket-work cradle must be bought, and should not be too small. The mattress, pillow, sheets and blankets should all be real, as the children say, and take on and off; a cradle that can only be looked at is not half so entertaining as one that can be taken to pieces so that the mattress can be turned and the pillow well shaken up in readiness for baby doll's next nap.

There is a great pleasure both in giving and receiving home-made toys; anything that mother makes is sure to be justly appreciated and admired by the little ones, and then, somehow, she knows just what each of the children will fancy for the Christmas presents almost better than they know themselves; so I will hope that these few words of mine will help some to make this season a happy and a merry one.

L. F. J.

Grains of Gold.

Defile not your lips with impure words.

The fall of the leaves is a whisper to the living.

Revenge is the only debt which it is wrong to pay.

Higher life comes from deep, earnest thought.

Between passion and lying there is not a finger's breadth.

We should study in all things to conciliate and cherish forgiveness.

Cultivate the lesser virtues, and the larger ones will become second nature.

This world will never have its difficulties explained without the aid of another.

At Christmas play and make good cheer, for Christmas comes but once a year.

Hurry is the mark of a weak mind; dispatch is the evidence of a strong one.

Envy is the sharp grit which aggravates existence and mars the happiness of a whole life.

No one learns to think by getting rules for thinking, but by getting materials for thought.

Nothing is more common than to try to reconcile our conscience to our evil thoughts by good actions.

Courage that grows from constitution often forsakes a man when he has occasion for it: courage which arises from a sense of duty acts uniformly.

A good moral character is the first essential in a man. It is, therefore, highly important to endeavor not only to be learned, but to be virtuous.

The silliest of all errors is when young men think that they forfeit their claims to originality if they acknowledge any truth has been discovered by others before them.

Those who would convert the world, should not forget to so live that others may know they are happier and better than those who consider religion as but a side issue.

Femininities.

A diamond "lucky" slipper is a novelty for brides.

Pointed toes to shoes for the feminine foot are in favor still.

A Brooklyn girl has taught her pet parrot to say "Merry Christmas."

It is considered proper in Utah for a woman to ask a man to marry her.

A wife who loses her patience, must not expect to keep her husband's heart.

Crabs, oysters, grasshoppers, beetles and spiders are the latest realistic brooches.

Half the world is ignorant of what the other half is doing just now. Reason—Christmas is coming.

An increase in the number of interesting-looking young women who wear eye-glasses is noted in New York.

A young Georgia woman eloped with a young man. Her father and brother met him, and now all three men are dead.

We have heard many women complain of their husbands' neglect of home. A spoonful of honey will keep more bees in the hive than ten of vinegar.

Milking stools are now put to real use in London. They are placed beside the guests at five o'clock tea, and serve as a resting-place for the cup and saucer.

"Would you take me for twenty?" said a young lady, who looked much younger. "Bless you, my child," said an admiring bachelor, "I would take you for life."

Several young ladies in Puebla, Mexico, have started a paper, which they call "The Mother-in-Law." Relatives of this kind are more respected in Mexico than here.

A new sect has sprung up in Canada whose doctrine is that women have no souls, because the Bible nowhere mentions women angels. The leader is a Frenchman.

Dark furs—like mink, seal, or Russian sable—should not be exposed to the direct rays of a hot sun, as they are all more or less dyed, and the direct rays of the sun fade them.

In Paris women wear high-heeled shoes when they don't expect to walk, and low heels when they do. In other words, they wear low-heeled shoes to use, and high-heeled ones to show.

Some new note paper has in the upper left hand corner a picture of a pussy with a ball of twine, which, unraveling, forms the words, "My dear——," and here the writer finishes it.

A Louisville woman asks for a divorce on the ground that her husband will not allow her to see the morning paper until he has first looked it over and cut out all advertisements of dress goods and millinery.

Women are better than men because they are spiritual, while men are intellectual. The spirit follows what is true, gentle and good; the intellect follows only what is pleasant, successful, dominating, strong. If women could rule, civilization would be a poem.

A young lady, whose very best young man lived over the way with his parents, took a seat by the window, one cloudy morning. "Why do you sit by the window such a chilly morning, Laura?" asked her mother. "I'm waiting for the sun to come out, ma," she replied.

Out West this winter it is a sort of craze for the young women to shoulder parlor rifles and tramp, in martial drill, up and down some big hall. But the young women are failures as minions of old Mars, since they cannot look fierce and bite their mustaches, to save 'em.

A friend of the fair sex declares that a raw potato is more effectual in beautifying the complexion than cosmetics. The face should be rubbed with the vegetable, then washed, and then a gentle friction. Ladies are advised to keep a raw potato on the wash-stand at all times.

The following are some anatomical localities newly mentioned in current literature: "He kissed her upon her appearance." "She whipped him upon his return." "They seated themselves upon his entering." "He kissed her back." "She sat down on his invitation."

"There has been a revival in our town." "Many people converted?" "Oh, yes, and among them twenty pupils of the Female College." "How do you know they are converted?" "Because they have declared their determination to flirt with none but divinity students hereafter."

A school teacher who was taken to Bellevue Hospital, N. Y., recently, suffering with mental troubles, has a hallucination that any one who looks at her can control her actions, and that one man with a red head compels her to walk one thousand miles a day. When she reads a book, out of every letter comes a figure dressed in white that goes sailing off into space.

"Now, pa, are you satisfied? Just look at my testimonial—'Political economy, satisfactory; fine arts and music, very good; logic, excellent.'" Father—"Very much so, my dear—especially as regards your future. If your husband should understand anything of housekeeping, cooking, mending, and the use of a sewing-machine, perhaps your married life will be happy."

A novel method for raising funds is to be resorted to at a church entertainment shortly to be held at Dayton, Ga. Each lady attending will be wrapped in a gossamer waterproof and veiled, and carry a lunch basket filled. They will then be "sold" at auction to the highest bidder, and the purchaser will secure the lady's company as a partner for the rest of the evening, and a share of the contents of her lunch-basket.

Of eighty-four female convicts shipped from Russia, a few days ago, for Siberia, thirty-six were transported for killing, or attempting to kill, their husbands, twenty-two of the thirty-six being yet in their teens. One bride of seventeen sweet summers murdered her husband six months after marriage; another of sixteen killed hers within a week, while a third of eighteen made herself a widow on her bridal night with the assistance of a sledge-hammer.

Masculinities.

The King of Dahomey has married 3,500 women.

Thomas James, of Gainesville, Fla., is the father of 53 children.

A Washington bridegroom recently gave the minister a $1,000 note.

A man over 100 years old recently asked to be taken to a Massachusetts almshouse.

An Indian and a Chinaman are partners in the stationery business at Rushville, Neb.

The reason why a good many men don't get married, is because they are afraid to come to the "scratch."

Lord Adelbert Percy Cecil, brother of the Earl of Exeter, is holding "Gospel services" in New York.

A 12-year old Portland lad, arrested for placing an obstruction on a railroad track, has gone insane, in his cell, through fear.

"Christmas time will soon slipper 'round again," as the young man observed as he looked at the well-worn pair he received a year ago.

The son of a wealthy Englishman has been captured by Turkish brigands, who demand $15,000 for him, and threaten to kill him if the money is not soon paid.

The Sultan of Morocco has 1,000 wives, and on Christmas morning he will receive enough pairs of slippers, smoking-caps, and pen-wipers, to start a first-class church fair.

"In an old book of travels in Sumatra," says a magazine writer, "we find a curious custom prevailing there. The tribe in question never let a man live beyond 72 without eating him."

A postmaster in Washington Territory was tied to a fence and cowhided by ten or twelve women, the other day, for periodically abusing his wife. He left town after the performance.

A death certificate was so filled in by a Chicago doctor as to have it appear he had killed his patient. He wrote his own name inadvertently in the space where the cause of death is specified.

"Why are two buttons put on the back of a man's coat?" asks a writer. So that when his wife neglects to sew the buttons on in front he can have a reserve of two to draw upon. This is a world of compensations.

Paris firemen are armed with guns. While on service in the city the men wear the cap of soldiers in the infantry service, and when at fires they wear a helmet of brass, with a black crest. The chief officer is a Colonel.

A certain young man, who lives in Hartford, Conn., before going on a recent fishing trip, applied a mustard plaster to his wife's lips, and when he returned he found that it had drawn out all the language there was in her.

Quinn Bohannan is in the Nebraska City jail under sentence of death for the murder of a young man with whom he had a controversy about the way to spell the word "peddler," and yet they say the West is not making progress in civilization.

A young man sent fifty cents to a New York advertiser to learn "how to make money fast," and was advised in reply to glue a 5 greenback to the bottom of his trunk. Having neither greenback nor trunk, he is still unable to make money fast.

A scientific society in Bridgeport, Conn., has been informed by a professor who has looked into the subject, that it is more than likely that Eve was tempted by a quince or pear, instead of the fruit that is commonly regarded as orthodox in that connection.

"What do you want?" said the barber, as he ran his fingers through the few remaining hairs on the head of a customer: "what you want is a bottle of my hair-restorer." "What I want," replied the customer, "is a divorce." And the barber said no more.

William E. Cramer, the editor of a Milwaukee paper, has been deaf from boyhood, and is totally blind, yet he is one of the hardest workers in the profession. He has been an editor nearly fifty years, and his office hours are as regular as when he was young.

An editor in Kinston, N. C., who doesn't object to good produce in lieu of cash subscriptions, gives emphatic and pointed notice that he will draw the line at "eight or ten-year-old roosters," which some subscribers have been in the habit of passing on him for spring chickens.

Two men and a woman, with a cowhide, called for satisfaction, lately, on the editor of a paper published in Missoula, M. T., but concluded they had better have him arrested. They arrived at this decision after he had thrown the whole party downstairs. He is now held for breach of the peace.

The happiness of married life depends on a power of making small sacrifices with readiness and cheerfulness. Few persons are ever called upon to make great sacrifices or to confer great favors; but affection is kept alive, and happiness secured, by keeping up a constant warfare against little selfishnesses.

The height of absurdity seems to have been reached in the prizes offered at the competitions of the British volunteers. The rewards of a recent contest were bottles of whisky and gin, gallons of beer, a clothes-brush, a pair of braces and a fork, spade, and shovel. The winner of another competition found himself the proud possessor of a pig's head.

A beautiful story is being told by the French papers regarding the Shah of Persia, in his capacity as an artist. Being displeased with a picture of Judi... with the head of Holofernes, declaring the severed head untrue to death, his majesty drew his keen sabre, and decapitating a wretched slave on the spot, convinced the trembling artist of his error.

"No," said Fogg, who had failed to find out, until the dealer mentioned it next day, that the latter had overpaid him in making change; "no, I never was good at arithmetic. There was my sister, for instance; when we were children, she was five years older than I, but now she is six years younger. And yet the same number of years have passed over both our heads. I can't understand it at all; no, sir, I never was good at arithmetic."

Three Eves.

BY E. LINWOOD SMITH.

A PERFECT rustic picture was Mr. Millard's farm-house as it stoood, half hidden by evergreen trees, at the base of a high hill.

It was the day before Christmas, and the inmates were preparing to celebrate the holiday in the true old English style.

To-day, Dorothy, or, as she was called, Dotty, had decorated the quaint, old-fashioned rooms with wreaths and festoons, and was reviewing her work, when the sound of a halting step in the passage caused the little figure to start and turn round.

Then a vivid flush mounted to her brow as the door leading into the room swung slowly open, revealing the person of a young man, thin almost to emaciation, and whose face, handsome in spite of its extreme pallor, showed deep lines of suffering.

A pair of crutches aided him to drag himself forward to the couch that Dotty hastily drew to the fire.

Slowly and with evident pain, he settled himself back among the cushions, while Dotty removed the crutches to a corner out of sight.

"Ah, Miss Millard!" said the invalid, in a tone of appreciation. "You have made a perfect bower of this place! How beautiful it looks!"

"I am glad you admire it," said Dotty. "But, Mr. Wilmot," she continued, reprovingly, "the doctor said positively that you were not to leave your room until to-morrow."

"Surely, you cannot blame my impatience," he replied, sadly. "Just think! It is one year to-night since I was brought to this friendly shelter, unconscious and nearly dead from that terrible railway accident. I feel to-night that I must curse my lot and die."

"Hush—hush! You must not say such dreadful things!" cried Dotty, springing to his side, and placing her tiny hand upon his lips. "I will not hear it—not even from you."

"Ah, Dot!—Miss Millard!—forgive me if I grow restive under the burden of memory. Nay, do not withdraw your hand," as she struggled to release it, for he had imprisoned it in his own. "It is because of you that I feel so bitterly towards fate."

"Because of me?" questioned Dotty, as a half-conscious look swept over her face.

"Yes," was the reply, as he drew her unresistingly towards him. "I have no right to tell you this; but, oh, Dotty! I must speak, or my heart will break. My darling, I love you! How dearly you may never know, for I cannot ask you to tie your young life to one like me; but to-night, as I remember what I was a year ago, my condition renders me desperate to madness. Then, had I met you, I could have asked you for the precious gift of your love; now I hardly dare think of you in your divine purity, that must always be the one sweet dream of my life when I am far, far away from you!"

And turning his head from her, a dry, hard sob escaped his lips.

For a moment Dotty watched him irresolutely, the tears falling swiftly over the sweet bright face; and then, with a happy cry, she knelt beside the couch and stroked the hair back from his forehead, saying tremulously, but with a glad, triumphant ring in her sweet voice—

"Oh, Mr. Wilmot, I am so happy that you have told me you love me! I can scarcely believe it; it seems too good to be real!"

At the first touch of the little brown hand, rough and hardened by toil, he had turned towards her, full of doubt; but, at the sight of her radiant face, he clasped her to his breast, and the tears that he had restrained a moment before now flowed freely.

"Love you, Dotty!" he exclaimed, fondly kissing the blushing face. "I have loved you from the moment I first regained consciousness, and found you at my bedside, bathing my head with your dear hands. You seemed a ministering angel, then, and that impression has grown with my knowledge of your goodness. Within a few weeks I had to keep strict guard over my words, fearing to reveal the secret which my lips have so madly confessed to-night. Your duties have kept you away from me lately more than usual, and to-day I felt that I could no longer endure your absence. I sought you here where I heard you at work. Dotty, forgive my weakness, and forget the story of my selfish love!"

"No, Lawrence," replied Dotty, hesitating over her lover's name, "I do not wish to forget the story of your love, for it has made me the happiest girl in the world to-night, although you tell me that you cannot ask me to be your wife. Lawrence,"—and here the soft, black eyes looked pleadingly into his—"I wish to give you a Christmas present, one that I know you will cherish fondly. Will you take me as a Christmas gift? Now, since you have confessed your love, I wish to be your wife."

"Oh, Dotty, do you tempt me to do you this great wrong!"

"Lawrence,"—and now the face grew scarlet, while the voice was low and faltering—"you will humiliate me if you refuse my Christmas gift! Do not turn me from you. That is all I could ever regret!"

"Heaven, I thank thee!" murmured the happy lover, as he again folded her in his embrace. "Oh, Dotty, it was only for your own sake that I hesitated!"

Dotty's father, who was a well-to-do farmer, demurred at giving his daughter and only child to a helpless cripple; but finding that he was abundantly supplied with this world's goods, and Dotty's happiness depended upon their acquiescence, he and his wife at last complied.

The lovers were married the forthcoming Christmas, much to the surprise of the neighbors, and went to the South of France; according to arrangement, and now at the end of the year their return was expected.

Before the inmates of Millard's farm had done to wonder who the visitors in the carriage could be, the door was flung open, and Dotty rushed into her mother's arms, crying for very joy at being home again, while Mr. Millard was shaking hands with his son-in-law, who was looking almost well.

Though still quite lame, he had received professional assurance of complete recovery in time.

Dotty's only unhappiness had been her separation from her parents. That was the happiest Christmas Eve any of them had ever known.

Lawrence has come to love the old place almost as dearly as does his wife, and at the urgent request of her parents he has determined to make it his future home.

Happiness reigns supreme in the old home, and no one ever thinks of enlarging or changing the little cottage, where three Christmas Eves have successively produced so much contentment.

WOMAN'S FRIENDSHIP.—It is a wondrous advantage to a man, in every pursuit or vocation, to secure an adviser in a sensible woman.

In woman there is at once a suitable delicacy of tact and a plain soundness of judgment which are rarely combined to an equal degree in man. A woman, if she really is your friend, will have a sensitive regard for your character, honor, and repute. She will seldom counsel you to do a shabby thing, for a woman friend always desires to be proud of you. At the same time her constitutional timidity makes her more cautious than your male friend. She therefore seldom counsels you to do an imprudent thing.

A man's best female friend is a wife of good sense and good heart, whom he loves and who loves him.

But supposing the man to be without such a helpmate, female friendship he must still have, or his intellect will be without a garden, and there will be many an unheeded gap in even the strongest fence.

Better and safer, of course, such friendships where disparities of years or circumstances put the idea of love out of the question. Middle life has rarely this advantage; youth and old age have.

We may have female friendships with those much much older and those much younger than ourselves.

Moliere's old housekeeper was a great help to his genious; and Montaigne's philosophy takes both a gentler and loftier character of wisdom from the date in which he finds, in Marie de Gournay, an adopted daughter, "certainly beloved to me," he says, "with more than paternal love, and involved in my solitude and retirement as one of the best parts of my being."

Female friendship is, indeed, to man the bulwark, sweetener, and ornament of his existence.

To his mental culture it is invaluable; without it, all his knowledge of books will never give him knowledge of the world.

M. S.

THE WATER-BOY.—The water-boy who goes through the passenger trains in Connecticut, with his pail of water and tray of tumblers, offering free drinks to all the passengers, is a survival of the war period. During the rebellion thousands of sick and wounded soldiers passed through the State on their way home to be nursed, and many of them, their canteens being empty, longed in vain for a draught of cool water. A late lawyer who was in the legislature at the time, having ridden on a train in which were home-returning soldiers, and noticing their distress on account of their inability to get water, at once pushed a law through the Legislature providing that all railroads in the State must carry water boys on their passenger trains. The statute still remains in force.

THE rainbow is beautiful, but without a storm, without a cloud, without descending raindrops it does not appear.

A Help to Good Digestion.

In the *British Medical Journal* Dr. W. Roberts, of England, discusses the effect of liquors, tea, coffee and cocoa on digestion. All of them retard the chemical processes, but most of them stimulate the glandular activity and muscular contractions. Distilled spirits retard the salivary or peptic digestion but slightly when sparingly used.

Wines were found to be highly injurious to salivary digestion. On peptic digestion all wines exert a retarding influence. They stimulate the glandular and muscular activity of the stomach. Effervescent wines exert the greatest amount of good with the least harm to digestion. When one's digestion is out of order everything goes awry, unless, as in the case of T. T. Seals, of Bellaire, Ohio, who had had dyspepsia for seven years, the digestive apparatus is kept in apple-pie eating order by Warner's Tippecanoe the best appetite producer and regulator in the world.

Tea even in minute quantities, completely paralyzes the action of the saliva. The tannin in strong tea is injurious. Weak tea should be used if at all. Strong coffee and cocoa are also injurious if used in excess.—*The Cosmopolitan.*

Recent Book Issues.

Miss Mary Anderson, the famous actress, will contribute to an early number of *Lippincott's Magazine* a paper of reminiscences of her recent trip to England, giving her impressions of London audiences and of London society.

Benn Pitman and Jerome B. Howard, managers of the Phonographic Institute, Cinn., have issued a neat "Phonographic Reader" containing a number of selections in the "corresponding style". We heartily commend it to all learning short-hand. Price 25 cents.

An excellent New England story is "The Pettibone Name," by Margaret Sidney. The plot is laid in an interior town of New England called Burkhamstead, and the characters are of a kind familiar to everyone who has lived in the New England States. There is the rural pastor; the reverend deacon, the country doctor, the village dressmaker, and the various well-known unprofessional types. The love of gossip is exemplified by the sewing society. The plot is simple, the interest turning on the self-denial of an old maid, who burns her father's will thereby diverting the property from herself to her married brother. She marries the clergyman at last, and her secret is revealed at the wedding by the dressmaker who was alone aware of it. The tale is cleverly told. The local color is warm and true, and the delineation of character clear and happy. 12mo, price 50 cents. Published by Lothrop & Co., Boston, Mass.

FRESH PERIODICALS.

With the December issue the prosperous *Magazine of American History* closes its fourteenth volume. The number opens with A. W. Clason's brilliant exposition of the part taken by Massachusetts (1788) in the adoption of the Constitution of the United States. The second article is The Brooklyn House of Philip Livingston, the Signer. Thanksgiving Day, Past and Present, is by Col. Norton. A Chapter of the Mexican War, is a most interesting paper, from the pen of General E. Parker Seammon, the tutor of General Grant at West Point. General ("Baldy") Smith's third paper is on the Campaign of 1861-1862 in Kentucky. How we Ran the Vicksburg Batteries, is a vivid sketch. A fine portrait of General George B. McClellan (the frontispiece) is accompanied by a tribute to his memory from the Editor. Among the short articles are: The Fight at Fayal, a poem, by Charles K. Bolton; Niagara Falls, by Hon. Luther R. Marsh; The Capture of Washington in 1814, illustrated; and Senator Anthony's Gift to Brown University, by Rev. J. C. Stockbridge, are highly entertaining. The minor departments are well filled. Subscription price, $5.00 a year in advance. Published at 30 Lafayette Place, New York City.

The English Illustrated Magazine for December appears as a Christmas double number. It has twelve full page illustrations after pictures by E. Burne Jones, F. Noel Pator, Sir Frederick Leighton, G. F. Watts, and other eminent artists. The contents are: Kiss and be Friends, by the author of John Halifax, with five illustrations after N. Noel Paton; Sir Roger de Coverley, from the Spectator, with twelve charming drawings by Hugh Thompson; The Body-Birds of Court, a story by Stanley J. Weyman; Through the Gates du Nord, by H. R. Robertson, with nineteen illustrations by the author; the continuation of D. Christie Murray's Aunt Rachel; a bright and interesting sketch of The House of Lords, with fifteen spirited illustrations by Harry Furness; Dr. Barrere, by Mrs. Oliphant; Dirk Willemszoon, by the Right Rev. the Bishop of Ripon; Captain Lackland, by Clementina Black; and From Dawn to Dawn, by George L. Moore. It is an uncommonly brilliant number in both text and illustrations. Published by Messrs. Macmillan & Co., New York.

With the January number *The Quiver* enters upon its second year. It opens with a story, Shy Poverty, by Anne Beale, which is followed by a serial, The Heir of Sandford Towers. The other fiction of the number is; Pinkbottens; Man Overboard; Oliver Langton's Ward, a serial; Agnes Brant's Work; and Dinah's Doll, a story of Seven Dials. By way of more solid food are: A Brooklyn Pastor, sketch of the Rev. Dr. Theo. Cuyler, by Dr. Newman Hall. This biographical sketch is accompanied by an admirable prtrait of Dr. Cuyler; Dean Plumptre discusses, Truth and Truthfulness. T. Cuthbert Hadden tells us of Martin Luther's passion for Church music and of the famous hymns he wrote, and Dr. Miles Hitchens gives us his idea of What Heaven is Like. Then there is a continuation of Rev. W. M. Statham's Voices in the Night; while the Rev. Philip T. Bainbridge discusses The Great Twin Brethren. The Scripture Lessons and Bible Class are continued and there is a bundle of "Short Arrows" of rare quality. The illustrations are many and excellent, and there is poetry and some music for Sunday evening singing. Cassell & Co., New York.

"JIM," said an honest coal dealer to one of his drivers: "Jim, make that ton of coal 200 pounds short. It is for a poor, delicate widow, and as she has to carry all of it up two flights of stairs I don't want her to overtax her strength."

IF some enterprising fellow would now corner the market on Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup he could make his fortune; for there are thousands who would rather pay double the retail price than be without this valuable remedy.

USES OF PAPER.

PAPER, being nearly air tight, will exclude cold, and should be used more than it now is. Builders place papers betwen the board and clap-boards of a house, and we should do well to follow their example in smaller matters.

Farmers have found that the extra warmth secured by tacking several thicknesses of newspapers around the inside of henhouses, etc., have saved extra food. A layer of paper under a carpet is preferable to straw, which is sometimes used; and if the paper made for this purpose can not be obtained, several layers of newspapers will do nearly as well.

Papers spread between bed coverings will take the place of extra blankets. A folded paper is an excellent lung protector; one over the chest and another around the shoulders, under the outside garment, would often save a cold and perhaps pneumonia.

Dissolved in flour paste, newspapers make a useful filling for cracks in floors and elsewhere.

Scraps of paper, wet and scattered over the floor when sweeping, will save the dust in the room as well as brighten the carpet.

Bits of paper with soapsuds are effectual in cleaning bottles, and are easily removed with the water. Greasy dishes and kettles, if first rubbed with paper, wash much easier: the paper absorbs the grease, and is all the better for kindling the fire. A grease spot can often be taken out of a carpet or garment by placing two or three layers of paper over it, then put a warm iron on the paper.

The heat soften the grease and the paper absorbs it, and by changing paper and iron occasionally and the grease will disappear.

Soft newspaper or tissue paper is preferable to cloth for cleaning lamp chimneys, windows, mirrors, etc., as it leaves no lint; also for knives, spoons, and tinware after scouring; and a stove will not need blacking so often if now and then rubbed with paper.

Scraps of writing paper or that used only on one side may be utilized in several ways.

Bowls and glasses without covers may be used for jelly, by cutting a round of paper the size of the top, dip in brandy and press down evenly upon the jelly, cut another cover of softer paper large enough to paste down on the outside of the jar.

Paper in bread and cake tins protects the loaf from burning, and insures its safe removal from the tin.

By this help a tin with holes in it may be used.

Laid over a loaf of cake in the oven, paper is also a protection; but unless it is warmed first, the cake may settle. Cut in strips and curled with the scissors, writing payer makes a good filling for pillows for hammocks, or the large pillows sometimes used to show off the elaborate "shams."

Postal cards and thin pasteboard can be cut in strips for lamp-lighters. Newspapers for the same purpose are cut in strips and rolled.

"Maryland, My Maryland."

* * * "Pretty Wives,
Lovely daughters and noble men."

"My farm lies in a rather low and miasmatic situation, and

"My wife!"

"Who?"

"Was a very pretty blonde!"

Twenty years ago, became

"Sallow!"

"Hollow-eyed!"

"Withered and aged!"

Before her time, from

"Malarial vapors, though she made no particular complaint, not being of the grumpy kind, yet causing me great uneasiness.

"A short time ago I purchased your remedy for one of the children, who had a very severe attack of biliousness, and it occurred to me that the remedy might help my wife, as I found that our little girl upon recovery had

"Lost!"

"Her sallowness, and looked as fresh as a new-blown daisy. Well, the story is soon told. My wife, to-day, has gained her old-time beauty with compound interest, and is now as handsome a matron (if I do say it myself) as can be found in this county, which is noted for pretty women. And I have only Hop Bitters to thank for it.

"The dear creature just looked over my shoulder, and says, 'I can flatter equal to the days of our courtship,' and that reminds me there might be *more pretty wives* if my brother farmers would do as I have done."

Hoping you may long be spared to do good, I thankfully remain,

C. L. JAMES,
BELTSVILLE, Prince George Co., Md.,
May 26th, 1883.

☞ None genuine without a bunch of green Hops on the white label. Shun all the vile, poisonous stuff with "Hop" or "Hops" in their name.

Facetiæ.

THE STORY OF THE RAIN.

You can accurately tell the man who's married,
If you'll notice how he acts some rainy day,
And observe how o'er his lady friend is carried
The umbrella that should keep the rain away.

If you find the lady his strong arm is gripping,
And is walking very closely by his side,
While the water is upon his shoulder dripping,
You may know she is a maiden or a bride.

If the drippings fall, however, on her bonnet,
And he walks about a foot or so ahead,
Then she's nothing but his wife, depend upon it,
And they've been for half a score of winters wed.
—U. N. NONE.

The best thing out—A big fire.

A go-between—Ham in a sandwich.

A common password—"The butter."

Going the rounds—Climbing a ladder.

An accessory before the act—The orchestra.

A man behind the times ought to feed on catch-up.

Domestic pursuit—Chasing the gudeman with a broomstick.

Said a conceited young lady: "You men are a covet-us set."

According to the Darwinian theory, our ancestors were all tail-bearers.

Why is an umbrella like yesterday? Because, once gone, it never returns.

Butcher—"Porterhouse steak, madam?" New landlady—"No, boarding-house."

Why is a drawn tooth like a thing no longer remembered? Because it is out of the head.

"That puts a different face on it," as the boy said when the ball he tossed up hit the dial of the clock.

If you have a piece of work you can't get done, just give a party of boys the idea that you don't want them to do it.

Here's thought for a Christmas season: Time is money—there is no time like the present time—that is to say, none which requires so much money.

There are some things we cannot account for by simple rule of three. For instance, the compass has four points; yet a pair of compasses has only two.

It is all right to toll a bell, but it makes a difference how you do it. A man once told a belle he would marry her, and it cost him $10,000 because he didn't.

The difference between Hanlan, the boating-man, and Sullivan, the prize-fighter, is only slight—one being a crack sculler, and the other a skull-cracker.

"You see," said Blooms to his sweetheart, in describing how he stepped on a lady's train and tore it, "I lost my head, you know." "Do you miss it much?" she queried.

Wanted to know—If an old maid is described as "an unappropriated blessing," should an old bachelor, on the same principle, be termed "an unappropriated curse?"

An exchange says that if clothes are brushed up, that is, the wrong way, they will not get shiny. We have tried this rule on a silk hat, and can testify that it works like a charm.

Wife, emphatically—"That dog of Smith's, across the way, bit mother again this morning, and I want to know what you propose doing about it." Husband—"I think I shall buy the dog."

"And so you would like to know what the 'M.D.' after a doctor's name means, Edith, would you, dear? Well, it is only an indication that he possesses a license to kill, the letters referred to standing for 'May Destroy.'"

A clergyman, endeavoring to console a rich miser in his dying hours, asked him: "In looking over your past life, what do you regret the most at this time?" "That I didn't die twenty years ago, when funerals were cheaper."

A smart bit of repartee was overheard the other day at Killarney. A guide with a tourist scowled at a peasant who stared well at him. "You'll know me again if you meet me," said the guide. "Not if you wash your face," said the peasant.

Scene—Doctor's house. Little boy, at the front door—"Is the doctor in? 'Cause if he is, I want to see him at once." Servant—"He's not in." Little boy—"Well, just as soon as he gets home, you tell him to come over to our house and take that baby away he left last week. It's in the way."

Husband—"A Wall street man, it is said, has just paid $34,000 for a seat in the Stock Exchange." Wife—"What dreadful extravagance! Considering the few hours each day that are given to business in the Stock Exchange, I should think that sensible people, rather than spend so much money, would prefer to stand up."

From an abstract given in a recent number of the Journal of the Chemical Society, it appears that "some supposed pentanitrodimethylaniline has just been shown to be trinitromethylnitraniline. The substance in question had been obtained from naphthyldimethamidophenylsulphone and diphenyldimethamidosulphone." Just so.

Young Men!--Read This.

THE VOLTAIC BELT CO., of Marshall, Michigan, offer to send their celebrated ELECTRO-VOLTAIC BELT and other ELECTRIC APPLIANCES, on trial for thirty days, to those afflicted with nervous debility, and all kindred troubles. Also very efficient for rheumatism, neuralgia, paralysis, and many other diseases. Complete restoration to health, guaranteed. No risk is incurred, as thirty days trial is allowed. Write them at once for illustrated pamphlet, free.

20 All Hidden Name Cards, an elegant 48 page floral Autograph Album, 3 French Dolls with wardrobe of 20 pieces, and 200 New Scrap Pictures, all for 25 Cents. SNOW & CO., Meriden, Conn.

INDIGESTION

To strengthen the stomach, create an appetite, and remove the horrible depression and despondency which result from Indigestion, there is nothing so effective as Ayer's Pills. These Pills contain no calomel or other poisonous drug, act directly on the digestive and assimilative organs, and restore health and strength to the entire system. T. P. Bonner, Chester, Pa., writes: "I have used Ayer's Pills for the past 30 years, and am satisfied I should not have been alive to-day, if it had not been for them. They

Cured

me of Dyspepsia when all other remedies failed, and their occasional use has kept me in a healthy condition ever since." L. N. Smith, Utica, N. Y., writes: "I have used Ayer's Pills, for Liver troubles and Indigestion, a good many years, and have always found them prompt and efficient in their action." Richard Norris, Lynn, Mass., writes: "After much suffering, I have been cured of Dyspepsia and Liver troubles

By Using

Ayer's Pills. They have done me more good than any other medicine I have ever taken." John Burdett, Troy, Iowa, writes: "For nearly two years my life was rendered miserable by the horrors of Dyspepsia. Medical treatment afforded me only temporary relief, and I became reduced in flesh, and very much debilitated. A friend of mine, who had been similarly afflicted, advised me to try Ayer's Pills. I did so, and with the happiest results. My food soon ceased to distress me, my appetite returned, and I became as strong and well as ever."

Ayer's Pills,

PREPARED BY
DR. J. C. AYER & CO., Lowell, Mass.
For sale by all Druggists.

HUMPHREYS'

Manual of all Diseases,
By F. HUMPHREYS, M. D.
HANDSOMELY BOUND IN
CLOTH and GOLD
Mailed Free.

LIST OF PRINCIPAL NOS.	CURES.	PRICE.
1	Fevers, Congestion, Inflammations...	.25
2	Worms, Worm Fever, Worm Colic....	.25
3	Crying Colic, or Teething of Infants.	.25
4	Diarrhea of Children or Adults.....	.25
5	Dysentery, Griping, Bilious Colic....	.25
6	Cholera Morbus, Vomiting.....	.25
7	Coughs, Cold, Bronchitis.....	.25
8	Neuralgia, Toothache, Faceache.....	.25
9	Headaches, Sick Headache, Vertigo..	.25

HOMEOPATHIC

10	Dyspepsia, Bilious Stomach.....	.25
11	Suppressed or Painful Periods.....	.25
12	Whites, too Profuse Periods.....	.25
13	Croup, Cough, Difficult Breathing....	.25
14	Salt Rheum, Erysipelas, Eruptions..	.25
15	Rheumatism, Rheumatic Pains.....	.25
16	Fever and Ague, Chills, Malaria.....	.50
17	Piles, Blind or Bleeding	.50
18	Catarrh, Influenza, Cold in the Head.	.50
19	Whooping Cough, Violent Coughs...	.50
24	General Debility, Physical Weakness	.50
27	Kidney Disease.....	.50
28	Nervous Debility.....	1.00
30	Urinary Weakness, Wetting Bed.....	.50
33	Diseases of the Heart, Palpitation..	1.00

SPECIFICS.

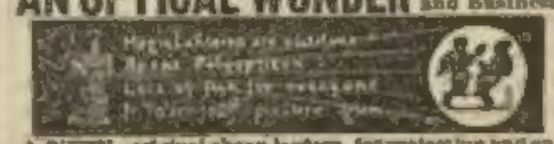
Sold by Druggists, or sent postpaid on receipt of price.—HUMPHREYS' MEDICINE CO., 109 Fulton St., N. Y.

40 Elegant all Hidden name, Embossed, etc. Cards and Present, 10cts. F. Lawrence, Hartford, Wis.

TELEPHONES SOLD.

Don't pay exorbitant rental fees to the Bell Telephone Monopoly to use their Telephones on lines less than two miles in length. A few months' rental buys a first-class Telephone that is no infringement, and works splendid on lines for private use on any kind of wire, and works good in stormy weather. It makes homes pleasant; annihilates time; prevents burglaries; saves many steps, and is just what every business man and farmer should have to connect stores, houses, depots, factories, colleges, etc., etc. The only practicable and reliable Telephone that is sold outright and warranted to work.
Chance for agents. No previous experience required. Circulars free. WM. L. NORTON, Buffalo, N. Y.

AN OPTICAL WONDER For Pleasure and Business



A NEW, original cheap lantern, for projecting and enlarging photographs, chromo cards, opaque pictures and objects. Works like magic, and delights and mystifies everybody. With 450 Pictures, No. 1, $2.50; No. 2, $5.00; by mail, 25 and 50 cts extra. *Wonder Catalogue* Free. HARBACH ORGAN CO. Philada. Pa.

DYKE'S BEARD ELIXIR

Produces a heavy Mustache, Whiskers, or beard on bald heads or face in 30 days. Entire remedy. Sent by Mail, under seal, for $1. Price per box, $1.50. Address Dyke Medicine Co., Syracuse, N. Y

For the Season.

The custom of decorating a Christmas tree has always been the favorite plan of dispensing gifts to the young people at merry Yule-tide.

The great reason for this partiality, I believe, must be that the green branches, laden with fancy articles, make such a pretty appearance.

Other modes of giving away presents have not invariably this advantage; nevertheless, novelty is always sought after at this season of the year by the elders, and will be duly appreciated by the young ones, so I propose to give a few hints for those to follow who desire that their festivities this year shall be marked by something "out of the common."

For the first, fancy dress is indispensable; but, as only three persons need attire themselves in olden costumes, it is not beyond the reach of many families, and does not necessitate much "fuss." Here, then, is my idea, which I trust will be found quite novel.

At the end of the room set apart for the purpose, a heavy curtain should be hung to act as a background to the tableau; a portiere of painted tapestry would be suitable, or some material should be chosen suggestive of what might have been used many years ago.

In front of the curtain is placed a Sedan chair, in which the presents, tied up neatly in paper, are packed away. A lady, dressed in the costume of the last century, stands at the door of the chair, as she is supposed to have just alighted from it, and presents the parcels to the eager recipients. A few merry words as each is put into the outstretched hands add much to the pleasure of the entertainment.

On either side stand the chair-bearers suitably apparelled.

Now, as to the practical part of the subject, which concerns mothers and aunts, on whom devolve the onerous duties of preparation for the festival.

By far the easiest plan, as a matter of course, is to hire the chair and costumes; but this may not always be convenient, and, if they cannot be manufactured at home, the only alternative may be that the plan must be entirely abandoned. But it never is to my taste to give up any fancy I have if I can possibly carry it out, and, after all, a little trouble taken over anything is sure to make it the more enjoyable to those concerned in it in the end, more especially if the aim in view is to give pleasure to others.

The carpenter's trade is a favorite with some men and boys, and, when such is the case, it will not be difficult to get a light framework made for the chair; but if such useful persons are not at hand, recourse must be had to a professional in this line of business.

Just the skeleton of the chair must be made of good, and strong millboard, painted black, and will serve in lieu of the wooden panelling.

A little gold paint, tastefully applied, or even gilt paper, which will be less troublesome to manage and quite as effective at a distance, will relieve the sombre appearance of the black.

Those who have seen old specimens of the Sedan chairs will readily know how to set about the manufacture. A good woodcut will be found a great assistance. From amongst the relatives or friends a young girl—not too young, because she ought to have a ready use of her tongue if the children are to have some fun out of it all—must be selected.

Her costume is important, so I will describe one or two styles that will be appropriate.

Evening dress: A plain underskirt of satin, with waistcoat. The low bodice and train of brocade are made in one, with Watteau plait at the back, commencing at the shoulders; elbow sleeves, with lace frills and long mittens.

The hair should, if possible, be arranged by a hairdresser, as the towering puffs and rolls, as well as the powder, are difficult for amateurs to manipulate.

Promenade dress: A quilted petticoat, plain satin waistcoat; bodice and overskirt of brocade. Over the shoulders, but leaving the throat bare, is a muslin fichu, edged with frills, the short ends carelessly tied in front.

The hat, which has a very wide brim and small high pointed crown, is trimmed with a tuft of ostrich tips, and it is placed just on the summit of the puff of hair. Long gloves and a black cane, silver-tipped, complete this charming costume.

My second proposition is a shop. Everyone knows what a pleasure it is to children to spend money, and the delight they find in buying anything that is just what they happen to fancy. It would be quite practical, I think, to erect a shop after the fashion of those now seen in old prints. The upper stories can be dispensed with altogether.

Two clothes-horses will come in well for the purpose, if nothing better can be had. Cover them with sacking, leaving a place for the long low window.

On the sacking paste grey or brown paper, and touch it up with the paint brush, so as to make it represent stone or wood.

The great point is to secure the time-worn look that such houses bore. Some of the illustrated papers would doubtless be of use as a guide.

The toys sometimes vary in value, and we wish to give the better ones to the older children.

Now in selling, one's wares this will be somewhat awkward to manage, so we must make provisions for it beforehand. Each of the children before entering the room should be provided with counters to represent coins, the elder having, say, six coins, the younger three coins. The presents must be set out with all of one price on one side, the rest on the other. The children must draw for their turn at buying.

If the shop is considered too great an undertaking to build satisfactorily, a Japanese stall will be found very easy. It should fill one corner of the room, and be made somewhat after the shape of a bay window.

Two pieces of wood should run upwards from the floor, and support a frame of wood to represent the front of the roof. This framework should be painted red, with little black figures, dragons, and Japanese marks drawn on it at intervals. Pictures can be hung from the roof, and some of the Japanese oddities in the shape of birds &c. dotted about improve the stall.

It should be lighted with Japanese lanterns, the rest of the room being kept dark.

Low kitchen tables do very well for placing the presents on, if covered with some foreign material, which must also be allowed to fall in front as low as the ground.

The cheap Syrian curtains will answer admirably.

Frostings.—I have had several inquiries on the above subject, and I imagine the difficulties experienced by the questioners all arise because they do not apply, as a preliminary, some weak gum water, made with pure white gum. I have never known this method to fail with leaves for Christmas decorations.

While the gum is still moist, the frosting powder must be applied, and liberally. The same treatment holds good for Christmas cards. In lieu of frosting powder I have sometimes substituted flour: this gives a very snow-laden aspect.

Mottoes.—The following are suitable for the hall and dining-room: "Welcome be ye that are here;" "Welcome all and make good cheers, welcome all another year;" "Welcome Yule;" "Christmas comes but once a year, and when it comes it brings good cheer;" "God bless all in the house;" "I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year;" "And therefore be you merry;" "Welcome, welcome, Christmas morn;" "Noel is king;" "So now is come our joyful'st feast, let every man be jolly;" "Each room with ivy leaves is dressed, and every post with holly;" "Each must become old Christmas' guest;" "The more the merrier, the fewer the better cheer;" "A hundred thousand welcomes;" "Here's a goodly cheer."

Another suggestion will please the boys. It is a Christmas ship. For this the carpenter made us a boat about six feet long, painted.

This we filled with bran and presents. Then over all was a deck with three masts, which lifted off altogether. This we decorated with small colored lamps, candles, crackers &c., placed sailors about, and suitable figures or presents over the deck. After these have been distributed, lift the deck off for the "bran pie."

The ship we placed on a platform covered with frosted cotton wool. A "Father Christmas" was present to assist.

Holiday Gifts.

I have lately noticed so many novel and tasteful little things such as are always in demand about the Christmas season for gifts to relations and friends, that I could not forbear making a note of some of them in the hope they would prove of use to the readers of the Post, who, perhaps, are not so fortunate in meeting with these pretty novelties as I have been.

A particularly useful and dainty present for a lady is a set consisting of collar and cuffs made in velvet, to be worn on any dress.

The collar is cut in the shape of an ordinary high military collar, on a very stiff foundation of buckram, so that it may be laid against the ordinary neck band of the dress, and a few stitches or pins, placed inside the dress collar without fear of their showing through to the velvet.

Occasionally, I have seen these collars made elaborate by turning over the points in the front and embroidering a small spray in the thus formed triangular pieces.

Another way of ornamenting them is to embroider all round the neck band instead of only in the corners, or a geometric design worked in small steel beads, has a very good effect on a black velvet ground; dull and bright jet beads also look well on a grey ground if to be worn when in mourning.

Gold braid also will trim the band very effectively.

Sometimes the collars have a small silk jabot attached to them made of silk of the same color.

These jabots are usually formed of a straight square piece of silk lined with cambric, pleated rather closely at the neck, but the lower part allowed to "fan" at its own free will.

These fan-shaped bows look very well worn out of door with a tailor-made dress, or plain jacket, but, if it is desired to make them more dressy—a frill of lace at the end, or lace round the lower and upper edges of the collar will soon effect this.

The cuffs, of course, must correspond with the collar and should be plain in shape, and joined so that they will slip over any plain tight sleeve and be easily kept in place with a pin, they should be sloped, so that the part which is worn on the under part of the sleeve is narrower than the upper.

A corner of these may also be arranged to turn back if desired, or the ornament may be carried across the cuff slantwise, or all round it if it will thus match the collar better.

To make the gift more complete, the set should be enclosed in a fancy ornamental cardboard box, tied round with colored china ribbon.

Another acceptable gift in these days of colored waistcoats is a vest made to pin inside a cut-away jacket. It may be made of either silk, satin, plush, or velvet of a becoming color, and must be shaped to the figure—narrow at the neck, wider at the chest, sloping in to the waist, and then widening out below the waist. If it is to be made of soft silk or satin, it may be arranged either in pleats or gathers according to taste.

Cuffs may, or may not be made to wear with these waistcoats—they are quite as often used by themselves.

For young ladies who patronize full banded bodies or Norfolk jackets, colored waistbands are suitable. Any pretty tint of silk or satin is appropriate for these. Rather wide buckram should be covered with the silk, and one end pointed. The band should be neatly lined with silk, and a buckle put at one end (not hooks and eyes), so that it may be drawn in to suit the wearer's own will and waist. These bands may or may not have a bow and very long ends of colored ribbon to be worn at the left side according to fancy, or a wide sash made up into bows and ends may be substituted for the ribbon. Sashes are to be much worn during the coming months, and a good handsome sash is always a gift appreciated by all young ladies.

There are many dainty lace and gauze vests and fichus to be purchased about Christmas time, but I, in this paper, am considering more especially the needs of those who like to manufacture their Christmas gifts themselves.

A child's ordinary small school slate may be transformed into a very attractive little gift by painting across one corner or at the bottom a spray of flowers, or a butterfly in another corner.

Across the top of the slate should be painted either the word "Memoranda," "Notes," "Notabilia," or "Memorabilia," according to fancy.

The frame should be either gilded or ebonized, and two small holes drilled in the top of the frame, through one of which should be passed a loop of ribbon to hang it up by, and through the other an end of the same ribbon, with a pencil attached to it.

A coat of crystal varnish applied to the painting when quite dry will render it quite waterproof, by which I mean that the damp sponge used to clean the slate will not in the least degree injure it when passed over it.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

BITES OR STINGS.—An old woodsman who used to catch snakes for pastime, says that a raw onion, bruised and applied as soon as possible to the wound, is a certain cure for the bite of all venomous serpents of Australia, except the death adder, which is so poisonous, and its poison so quick in acting, that there is no remedy for it. That the onion is a specific for the sting of poisonous insects of all kinds has long been known to the writer of this paragraph, who, when a boy, invariably carried one in expeditions with companions against hornets' nests, etc. It was found that the application of onion juice would instantly allay the pains caused by the sting of the hornets, yellow-jackets, wasps, bees, etc.

A cow that actually does jump over the moon, while a cat fiddles beneath, may be seen among new Christmas toys.

Confidential Correspondents.

CLON.—The word slave is derived from the Salvi or Sclavonians, who were reduced to servitude by the Germans.

JESSIE.—We cannot advise you to get married before your intended husband has made a home for you, and can keep you comfortably in it.

J. K. L.—The word "mesh" means delicate, tender, soft. There is no other English word which perfectly expresses constitutional tenderness or delicacy.

ELLA.—There is no law of etiquette on the subject of lovers returning each other's letters when they quarrel; but it is usually the result of mutual understanding. Such a surrender of letters on either side is a very prudent course.

MOLLIE B.—The cushion dance is a very old round dance. In most ancient dances a man and a woman danced together, holding each other by the hand or arm, and a kiss was the established fee of the lady's partner kneeling on a cushion or pillow.

F. O. M.—Your position is indeed an unfortunate one with such a husband; but we really are quite at a loss how to advise you in the matter. If you left him, he might keep the children; and you evidently would not like to part with them. Your lot is one of that unfortunate class which is beyond all advice.

C. R. JACKSON.—We are sorry we cannot give you any definite information as to unimproved land in the South. The best plan for you to adopt would be to apply to the land agent in some of the larger southern towns, or advertise in one of the local newspapers of the district which you may consider likely to suit you.

SALLY.—If your eyesight has been weakened by severe and protracted exercise, or from any other cause, carefully avoid all attention to minute objects or such business or study as requires close application of the visual faculty, immediately on rising; and the less it is taxed awhile after eating, or by gas or candle-light, the better.

O. I. T.—We cannot precisely understand what advice it is that you require from us. When you say that the young lady "keeps very dark" towards you, we presume you mean that she is cold or distant; and if you intend us to counsel you how you are to overcome this behavior on her part, we can only recommend you to adopt a line of conduct comprising the most delicate but earnest attention.

RELEASE.—You are bound by the condition and stipulations contained in your lease. If that says it may be terminated by either party on thirty days' notice, then no longer notice is necessary. If your contract calls for the payment of rent in advance, and your landlord does not insist on that provision, that is his lookout. You are still entitled to thirty days' notice, though your landlord can distrain for rent as soon as the money is due to him.

TEACHER.—A horn book was the primer for learning the elements of reading used before the days of printing, and common down to the year 1700. It consisted of a single leaf containing on one side the alphabet in black letter or Roman, with a number of monosyllables. Then followed the Lord's Prayer, with the Roman numerals as a final. The leaf was usually set in a frame of wood with a slice of transparent horn in front—hence the name of horn-book.

JOHN B.—The Argonautic expedition was, according to tradition, conducted by Jason, son of the King of Thessaly, to bring back the golden fleece of the ram which had carried away Phrixus and Helle. The celebrated Argo was built, which after various adventures reached Æa, the capital of Colchis, B.C. 937. Æetes, the King, promised Jason the fleece on certain conditions difficult of accomplishment. These, by the magical aid of Medea, were performed, and the enterprise was ultimately achieved.

READER.—The established church of England is Protestant Episcopal. Its doctrines are embodied in the Thirty nine Articles agreed upon in convocation in 1562. The Queen is by law the supreme governor of the Church, and she nominates to the vacant archbishoprics and bishoprics. The Church of England clergymen number about 34,000. In the theory of English law every Englishman is a member of the Church of England. But there are about 12,500,000 dissenters in England and Wales, the members of the Established Church numbering 13,500,000.

JOE.—When a young man quarrels with his father he is very apt to put a most liberal construction on all his own acts and motives, and quite a contrary one on all of his father's. This is probably so in your case. Not that we mean to charge you with intentional unfairness, but simply that we wish to call your attention to the course which unregenerate human nature is almost certain to take whenever it becomes embittered in a quarrel. Our advice to you is, that you study your case all over from beginning to end, imagining yourself to be a father with a son who has acted precisely as you have done, and see if you cannot discover enough flaws in your own conduct to justify your father in at least a portion of his behavior to you.

STRICKEN.—It is a very difficult thing to say which side a daughter should take in a domestic quarrel between her mother and father. It would, perhaps, promote quietness and harmony if she held aloof entirely. "The least said, the soonest mended." If your lover comes to see you when under the influence of drink after you have forbidden him to do so, and begged him to become a teetotaller, have nothing further to do with him; avoid him as you would some poisonous reptile, whose nature it is to sting and to kill. You will never be happy with a drunkard. A drunkard has no moral stamina, and will ruin his best friend, if he can do so secretly, for the purpose of getting money to buy drink.

HOLLYOAK.—The origin of mince pies is involved in fables. By some it has been supposed, from the Oriental ingredients which enter into its composition, to have a reference (as probably had also the plum-porridge of those days) to the offerings made by the wise men of the East; and it was anciently the custom to make these pies of an oblong form, thereby representing the manner in which on that occasion, those sages found the infant Jesus. Against this practice (which was of the same character with that of the little image called the Yule Dough, or Yule Cake, formerly presented by bakers to their customers at the anniversary of the Nativity) the Puritans made a vehement outcry, as idolatrous.